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Great Comic Scenes
from
English Literature

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"Motley's the only wear."

Great Comic Scenes
from
English Literature

Chosen and Edited by
LANCELOT OLIPHANT



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PREFACE

It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that this is not intended to be a full and exhaustive anthology of great comic scenes from English literature, but only a selection of such scenes. It is quite realised that there are many other comic scenes in the works of the English humorists that are little if at all inferior to those given, and the difficulty has been to decide what to leave out rather than what to put in. It will be found, however, that, so far as the older writers are concerned, nearly every piece included has pleased generations of discriminating readers, and is admitted to be of outstanding excellence as an example of English humour.

The introduction, it should be explained, is designed mainly for the general reader, and contains information which it is hoped may be of some help towards a fuller appreciation of the pieces given.

My sincere thanks are due to the following authors and publishers, who have kindly permitted me to use copyright material: to Messrs. Heinemann and Mr. J. B. Priestley for the extract from *The Good Companions*; to Messrs. J. W. Arrowsmith for the extract from Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*; to Messrs. Macmillan and the author's executors for the extract from Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*; to Mr. H. G. Wells for the extract from *The History of Mr. Polly*; to Messrs. Longmans, Green for F. Anstey's "At a Wedding," from *Voces Populi*; to Messrs. John Lane and Mr. Stephen Leacock for "The Cave-Man as He is," from *Frenzied Fiction*; and to Mr. W. W. Jacobs for "The Money Box," from *Odd Craft*.

LANCELOT OLIPHANT.

LONDON, 1930.

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INTRODUCTION

RICH and joyous humour, thoroughly national in kind, is one of the treasures of English literature ; and that humour is not confined to any one period, but is the splendid offering of a long succession of great comic writers from the time of Chaucer down to the present day.

The first of these writers whose work has here been drawn upon is Shakespeare. Shakespeare's humour assumes bright and varied forms in even his earliest comedies ; but it is not until we reach *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that it can be said to have definitely matured. In that play he gives us Nick Bottom. There is nothing tentative or experimental about Bottom. He is a gigantic droll who towers above all the comic creations of the earlier plays, and typifies in his own inimitable person the fine flower of the absurd.

In *As You Like It* we have humour of another kind, for there much of the laughter turns upon the ironical banter of Touchstone and the acid wit of Jaques. Jaques, it has been said, is like the first light and brilliant sketch for Hamlet ; and there are, apparently, some striking points of resemblance between the two. Both are morbidly super-sensitive, both consumed with melancholy, both spectators of the scene of life with a rooted dislike for action, and both weary of the world and all that is in it. But there is much difference of opinion as to the true character of Jaques. By some he is regarded as a humbug, and his mockery and scorn as a mere pose ; by others, as a bitter misanthrope, with an intense and brooding hatred for the whole of the human race. The truth, however, would seem to be that he is an example of the brilliant failure ; of the courtier and thinker who has never realised his ambitions ; and that his mockery and scorn are the petulant railings of the disappointed man.

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The scene from *Twelfth Night* is one of the ripest examples of Shakespearean comedy. Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Maria, and Fabian form a radiant group of diverse comic characters, and admirably serve to set off the languishing daydreams and absurd eccentricities of the infatuated Malvolio. "Malvolio," says Charles Lamb, "is not essentially ludicrous. He becomes comic but by accident. He is cold, austere, repelling, but dignified, consistent, and, for what appears, rather of an over-stretched morality. Maria describes him as a sort of Puritan; and he might have worn his gold chain with honour in one of our old Roundhead families, in the service of a Lambert or a Lady Fairfax. But his morality and his manners are misplaced in Illyria. He is opposed to the proper *levities* of the piece, and falls in the unequal contrast. Still, his pride, or his gravity (call it what you will), is inherent, and native to the man, not mock or affected, which latter only are the fit objects to excite laughter. His quality is at the best unlovely, but neither buffoon nor contemptible. His bearing is lofty—a little above the station, but probably not much above his deserts. We see no reason why he should not have been brave, honourable, accomplished."

In *Twelfth Night*, then, we have comedy of the highest order. But Shakespeare's comic genius reaches its peak in the two parts of *King Henry the Fourth*; for there we find Falstaff, the greatest comic character in English literature, and probably in the literature of the world. From the first scenes in which he appears we are completely under his spell, and remain so until the curtain falls or the book is closed. Judged by ordinary moral standards Falstaff might be regarded as a liar, a coward, and a rogue. But ordinary standards cannot here be applied; for Falstaff lives in a world of his own creation, a world from which the serious is banished, and where life is a perpetual banquet of laughter, feasting, and delight. His lies are nothing more than a colossal joke, the outcome of his irrepressible high spirits and sense of fun. They are not attempts to deceive, for they would deceive no one, but brilliant improvisations which give him unrivalled opportunities to exhibit his nimble

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wit and ready resource in extricating himself from all kinds of humorous dilemmas. Nor is he a coward. He will fight if it comes to the push, but he will not "fight longer than he sees reason." Life is good, and though death comes to all he will not, fool-like, go out to meet him. Honour?—Honour is a mere scutcheon, and therefore he'll none of it. But death came at last even to him, and the hostess's description of the final scene is one of the most moving in literature: "Nay, sure, he's not in hell: he's in Arthur's bosom. A' made a finer end and went away an it had been any christom child; a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning o' the tide: for after I saw him fumble with the sheets and play with flowers, and smile upon his fingers' ends, I knew there was but one way; for his nose was as sharp as a pen, and a' babbled of green fields."

From Shakespeare we turn to Beaumont and Fletcher, the authors of *Philaster*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *The Scornful Lady*, and other romantic plays. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, a scene from which has been included in the anthology, is a satirical comedy burlesquing the absurdities of the chivalrous romances of the day, and may possibly have been suggested by *Don Quixote*, the first part of which appeared about six years before the play was written. It is by many regarded as the most pleasing of all the plays of these two writers, not so much for the humours of the burlesque as for the freshly observed characters of the citizen and his wife.

The next two selections are perhaps examples of unconscious humour, although this is by no means certain. Mr. Pepys had his own ideas of what was funny. They are both taken from the famous *Diary*, which was written in a secret cipher, the key to which Mr. Pepys no doubt thought was known to himself alone. But after lying neglected in the library of Magdalene College, Cambridge, for a hundred and fifty years, the *Diary* was at length deciphered, and all poor Mr. Pepys's peccadilloes revealed to an amused and delighted world.

The Rehearsal is a clever burlesque ridiculing the

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extravagances of the "heroic" plays of the Restoration, and more particularly *The Conquest of Granada* by John Dryden, the poet-laureate, who is satirised as "Mr. Bayes." An heroic play was supposed to be an "epic-drama," dealing with a great subject in the grand manner; but actually it was a wild and turgid melodrama marked by rant androdomontade, and compact of the grossest absurdities. "Declamation roared while Passion slept." *The Rehearsal* is usually attributed to George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham, the Zimri of Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*; but there can be no doubt that he was only one of the authors. Most of the noted wits of the day seem to have had a hand in it, and, like a modern musical comedy, it was altered from time to time to make it more topical and bring it up to date. It suggested Sheridan's *Critic*.

"The Grand Academy of Lagado" is from *Gulliver's Travels*, one of the fiercest satires in the language. Swift was a good hater, and sometimes lashed what he hated with an almost insane fury. Here, however, the invective is comparatively mild. He is ridiculing all kinds of speculators and projectors, and the satire is calm, penetrating, and deadly. There is not the slightest indication that Swift himself is amused at what he is describing, but every detail is set down with a cold and immovable gravity that enormously intensifies the effect. It is one of the ironies of literature that a satire which was written to revile humanity, and, as Swift himself confessed, "to vex the world," has long since lost its sting, and now survives as a harmless story book for boys and girls.

William Congreve was the greatest of the comic dramatists of the Restoration, the other members of the group being Etherege, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. All were exponents of the highly artificial comedy of manners of the day, a type of comedy brilliant, witty, and polished in style, but cynical in outlook and licentious in tone. There is here none of the large tolerance and wide-ranging humour of Shakespeare, for the Restoration dramatists deliberately confined themselves to a small section of the "town," and exhibiting the foibles of so-called "society,"

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left the rest of the world untouched. The chief comedies of Congreve are *The Old Bachelor*, *The Double-Dealer*, *Love for Love*, and *The Way of the World*, and all are characterised by immense intellectual power and a superb sense of style. It is in style, indeed, that Congreve excels. In his dialogue the language is perfectly wedded to the thought. His prose has an exquisite poise and balance that has never been surpassed. The wit is of that rare and fine quality which is the delight of the literary epicure. "His style," says Hazlitt, "is inimitable, nay perfect. It is the highest model of comic dialogue. Every sentence is replete with sense and satire, conveyed in the most polished and pointed terms. Every page presents a shower of brilliant conceits, is a tissue of epigrams in prose, is a new triumph of wit, a new conquest over dullness. There is a peculiar flavour in the very words, which is to be found in hardly any other writer." These excellences inform all his work, but they are to be found in their perfection in his last play, *The Way of the World*. There, too, we have the divine Millamant, Congreve's most finished character creation, and the incomparable fine lady of high comedy.

The next scene, "Sir Roger at Church," is one of the most delightful of the many papers that Addison contributed to the *Spectator*. Here there is all the ease, elegance, and good taste, the gentle irony, tender humour, and urbane wit, for which the essays of Addison are so justly famous. The *Spectator* is a true mirror of the times, and in its pages the age of Queen Anne seems to live again. The clubs, the theatres, the coffee-houses, the literary fashions, street cries, picture-galleries, opera lions, the foibles of the women and the follies of the men, all are presented with a vivid actuality and an unforgettable charm. In the Coverley papers indeed we have the first definite promise of the novel of contemporary life.

This promise was realised in the work of the great novelists of the mid-eighteenth century, Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett, and it is of the last three of these, as English humorists, that a little must be said.

Fielding's first novel, *Joseph Andrews*, began as a

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burlesque of Richardson's *Pamela*, but the characters refused to be penned within these narrow limits, and, taking the story into their own hands, made it into something entirely new in English fiction—a comic epic poem in prose. Fielding proceeded to develop this idea of the comic epic, and in *Tom Jones* produced one of the greatest novels ever written. “As a picture of manners,” says Thackeray, “the novel of *Tom Jones* is indeed exquisite; as a work of construction quite a wonder: the by-play of wisdom, the power of observation, the multiplied felicitous terms and thoughts, the varied character of the great Comic Epic keep the reader in a perpetual admiration and curiosity.” Fielding stands at the head of all the English novelists. His work is spacious, vital, and human, and reveals a healthy scorn of weak sentimentality, hypocrisy, and cant. As a humorist he is second only to Shakespeare, for his humour is of a kind that is rooted deep in a wise understanding of human frailty.

The work of Smollett is in marked contrast to that of Fielding, for while Fielding's comedy is the comedy of manners, Smollett's is the comedy of “humours”; that is, the type of comedy which devotes itself to a representation of the oddities and eccentricities of character. Hence Smollett's method, though vigorous and arresting, is largely superficial. No attempt is made at analysis of motive, and little at development of character, while the humour, except in parts of *Humphry Clinker*, is the frankest farce. Smollett's novels are examples of the “picaresque” type of fiction; in other words, they are made up of a series of comic incidents and casual, unrelated adventures. They therefore have no unity of plot. This had an important bearing on the work of Dickens, whose early novels were greatly influenced by *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Humphry Clinker*, Smollett's three most notable books.

Memorable as had been the achievement of Fielding and Smollett in other respects, their novels lacked that delicacy of sentiment and humane outlook which was necessary to mitigate the hardness of their touch. This deficiency was supplied by Laurence Sterne, one of the strangest figures

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in English literature. In his books, Sterne deliberately set every law of literary composition at defiance, and *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey* are such a hotch-potch of audacious irrelevance, elusive humour, sniggering innuendo, and sentimental pose, that it would seem that nothing but chaos could result. Yet so subtle is the skill with which all these elements are blended that they ultimately convey an impression of unity that is a sign of the highest art. Sterne, in truth, is a novelist of the first rank : a master of pathos, a true and original artist, and, in *My Uncle Toby*, *Corporal Trim*, and the *Widow Wadman*, the creator of some of the pre-eminent comic types in English fiction.

To read Goldsmith after Sterne is "like going into a garden of lilies out of some dark and narrow house." *The Vicar of Wakefield* is a beautiful prose idyll, pervaded by a mellow humour and a fragrant charm. Its faults of construction and the absurdities of its plot have often been dwelt upon, but it is everywhere suffused with such a warm and lovable humanity, that these blemishes have done little or nothing to impair its popularity. It has indeed not only a national but a European reputation. Goldsmith, moreover, was scarcely less successful as a dramatist, and *She Stoops to Conquer* is one of the very few of the older comedies that still hold the stage. Dr. Johnson said of it at the time : "I know of no comedy for many years that has so much exhilarated an audience, or answered so much the great end of comedy in making an audience merry."

Sheridan's comedies belong to the school of the Restoration dramatists, and have unmistakable affinities with those of Congreve and Vanbrugh. His first play, *The Rivals*, is a farcical comedy, full of ingenious situations and almost riotous fun. In it we find the impetuous and irascible Sir Anthony Absolute, the comically swaggering Bob Acres, the sentimental Lydia Languish, and what Mr. Polly would call the "High Egrugious" Mrs. Malaprop with her "nice derangement of epitaphs." Some of these characters were of course already familiar dramatic types, but Sheridan

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contrived to give them an individual touch that made them seem original creations. *The Rivals* was followed by *The School for Scandal*, which, in its comic invention, consummate stagecraft, and sparkling wit, is one of the masterpieces of comedy. Lady Teazle, Sir Peter Teazle, Charles Surface, Joseph Surface, and Lady Sneerwell are a wonderful gallery of portraits, closely observed and humorously delineated ; while the " screen-scene," the scandal scenes, and the celebrated scene in which Charles Surface sells the family pictures brilliantly illustrate the skill of Sheridan's dramatic technique. Sheridan's last play of importance was *The Critic*, a farcical burlesque, modelled upon the lines of Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, and satirising, in the person of Sir Fretful Plagiary, Richard Cumberland, a peevish but not untalented dramatist of the time. It has been well said of *The Critic* that it is a triumph of sheer wit over the usual transitoriness of burlesque.

With " A Day at the Branghtons' " we return to comedy in the novel. *Evelina*, from which the scene is taken, is probably the best of the minor novels of the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the century it seemed that the novel of manners, as hitherto treated, had worked itself out ; but Fanny Burney, by combining the methods of Richardson and Fielding, and cleverly adapting them to her own ends, produced the novel of domestic satire. *Evelina* is a bright, freshly written story, showing keen feminine observation and a pleasant vein of humour and wit. It was a great favourite with both Dr. Johnson and Lord Macaulay.

Jane Austen carried on the development of the novel of domestic satire, and in doing so immeasurably outdistanced her predecessors. For her novels are the most exquisitely wrought works of fiction in English : delicately painted miniatures on " two inches of ivory." Her art, it is true, is quiet and subdued, and her scope restricted. She has no fine sentiments, no passionate adventures, no elaborate plot. But she knew her limitations, and in attempting nothing that she could not perfectly achieve she produced work that has given her an enduring place among the

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greater English novelists. "Fulfilling a Promise" and "Mr. Collins's Proposal" are two of the choicest comic scenes in prose fiction.

In "The Origin of Roast Pig" we have humour of a new kind—the elvishly whimsical. The passage given forms part of one of the famous *Essays of Elia*, and in its glancing fancy, perverse allusiveness, gentle satire, and quaint conceits we find those qualities that have made Lamb's work unique. Although Lamb was not successful as a dramatist, this extract can be clearly visualised as a delightful piece of dramatic writing, and forms a complete little comedy in itself.

Who does not know and love Miss Matty Jenkyns and Captain Brown? *Cranford* is one of those rare and beautiful books that are never outmoded and never pall. It is a simple, unpretentious sketch of village life, with little love interest and no plot; yet so full is it of tender humour, wistful pathos, sweetness, and charm that it is likely to survive when far more ambitious books have been forgotten. It was described by Lord Houghton as "the finest piece of humoristic description that has been added to British literature since Charles Lamb," and there can be no doubt that the genius of Lamb and Mrs. Gaskell had something in common. "One could imagine Mrs. Sarah Battle and the poor relation dwelling in Cranford," says Anne Thackeray Ritchie, "and if Charles Lamb could have liked anything that was not London, he too might have fancied the place."

Dickens and Thackeray were the two outstanding English humorists of the nineteenth century. But their humour is widely different in kind. Thackeray's is the humour of Fielding, Dickens's the humour of Smollett; Thackeray's the humour of satire, Dickens's the humour of burlesque; Thackeray's the polished humour of comedy, Dickens's the broader humour of farce. This difference in the quality of the humour can be readily seen in the way that each presents his comic characters. Compare, for example, the comic treatment of Sir Pitt Crawley, Captain Costigan, and Becky Sharp with that of Mr. Micawber, Dick Swiveller,

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and Mrs. Gamp. In the Thackeray group it is mainly ironical and bitter, in the Dickens group mainly genial and tolerant. Moreover, Thackeray's characters, although ironically conceived, are people whose counterparts we might easily find in real life. Dickens's characters are mostly caricatures, and the figures of farce. Thackeray's comic characters, compared with those of Dickens, are therefore truer to life. But, none the less, Dickens's grotesques are conceived with such an intensity and force that, in their own environment, they create a complete illusion of reality. The humour of Thackeray is seen at its best in *Vanity Fair*, *Pendennis*, and *Esmond*; and that of Dickens in *Pickwick Papers*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and *David Copperfield*.

So much for the work of the older writers. The work of the contemporary writers represented in the anthology will be familiar to most readers, and it is therefore unnecessary to refer to it except in the briefest terms.

Alice in Wonderland is a delightful fantasy, characterised by sportive humour and inconsequent wit. It was written to amuse Alice Liddell, the daughter of Dean Liddell, and was thus originally a children's book; but its wise nonsense is relished perhaps even more keenly by children of a larger growth. Its sequel, *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, is in no way inferior.

"Inside the Malt-House" is taken from *Far from the Madding Crowd*, one of the finest of the Wessex novels. The scene here given is almost Shakespearean in its creative humour and deep insight into the vague recesses of the bucolic mind. It should be compared in this respect with the scenes from *Henry the Fourth*, "Shallow and Silence," and "The Death of Old Double," given at the beginning of the anthology.

Three Men in a Boat was one of the most popular humorous books of the latter part of the nineteenth century. It is full of youthful high spirits and boisterous fun, and although its lustre has since become somewhat dimmed it can still be read with a good deal of pleasure. It is a mistake, however, to regard it as Jerome's best book. It is far surpassed, for

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instance, by *Paul Kelver*, a novel too little known, and by *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, a play which has sterling merits, and is supposed to have exercised an immense influence on playgoers of the last generation. It is doubtless by his more serious works, such as these, that Jerome would have wished to be remembered.

Anstey's *Voces Populi* appeared thirty years ago, but much of it is as topical and amusing to-day as at the time when it was written. It consists of a number of dialogues in which all kinds of people are made to reveal themselves in a satirically humorous fashion, and shows minute and accurate observation of the various types portrayed.

The History of Mr. Polly is Mr. Wells's greatest book. Here he is for once neither prophet nor preacher, but is content simply to tell a story ; and with the happiest results. Its rich flowing humour, romantic glamour, and eager zest for life make it one of the joys of modern literature.

The Money Box is an example of Mr. W. W. Jacobs' work at its very best. It displays in the highest degree all those qualities which have won his stories such a deservedly great reputation : clear-cut character-drawing, crisp natural dialogue, and that delicious type of humour which he has made so entirely his own. The world in which his characters move, however, is the tiny artificial world of farcical comedy, where love is no longer a passion, life seems more or less of a joke, night-watchmen tell the most wonderful stories, and sailormen dream of unlimited beer. The range of Mr. Jacobs' art is therefore extremely narrow, but within its limits it is almost perfect.

"The Cave-Man as He is" is a representative specimen of the robust and rollicking humour of Mr. Stephen Leacock. His fun is of much the same variety as that of Mark Twain, Max Adeler, and Artemus Ward—good, honest farce, with frequent excursions into satire and burlesque of the more obvious kinds. Among his most popular books are *Literary Lapses*, *Nonsense Novels*, *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*, *Winsome Willie*, and *Short Circuits*.

In *The Good Companions* Mr. J. B. Priestley wrote a novel

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that was an instant success and that was acclaimed by many good judges as a masterpiece. Others, however, refused to accept this estimate, and said some hard things about the book. They said, for instance, that Mr. Priestley wrote with his eye on the public, and that he had fashioned the book according to some magic formula he had evolved for a best-seller ; that his art was “ photographic ” ; that he had a genius for the obvious ; that he was the perfect showman cunningly pulling the strings that gave his puppets the semblance of life, and that it was impossible to name a single great character in the whole of his work. All this probably does not trouble Mr. Priestley in the slightest : some of the early reviewers said much the same thing about Dickens. Whether *The Good Companions* does or does not possess the qualities which will make it endure time alone can show. But this at least can be said : that in its wide sweep, glowing vitality, and glorious humour it worthily maintains the great traditions of the English novel.

L. O.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1564-1616

I...THE RUDE MECHANICALS

Athens. Quince's House

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.

Quince : Is all our company here ?

Bottom : You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quince : Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bottom : First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

Quince : Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bottom : A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quince : Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bottom : Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quince : You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bottom : What is Pyramus ? a lover, or a tyrant ?

Quince : A lover that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bottom : That will ask some tears in the true performing of it : if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes ; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest : yet my chief humour is for a tyrant : I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

THE RUDE MECHANICALS

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison gates ;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

This was lofty ! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover is more condoling.

Quince : Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flute : Here, Peter Quince.

Quince : Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flute : What is Thisby ? a wandering knight ?

Quince : It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flute : Nay, faith, let not me play a woman ; I have a beard coming.

Quince : That's all one : you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bottom : An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, " Thisne, Thisne " ; " Ah Pyramus, my lover dear ! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear ! "

Quince : No, no ; you must play Pyramus : and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bottom : Well, proceed.

Quince : Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Starveling : Here, Peter Quince.

Quince : Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout : Here, Peter Quince.

Quince : You, Pyramus' father : myself, Thisby's father, Snug, the joiner ; you, the lion's part : and I hope here is a play fitted.

Snug : Have you the lion's part written ? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quince : You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

THE RUDE MECHANICALS

Bottom : Let me play the lion too : I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, " Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quince : An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ; and that were enough to hang us all.

All : That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bottom : I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us : but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quince : You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man ; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day ; a most lovely gentleman-like man : therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bottom : Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in ?

Quince : Why, what you will.

Bottom : I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quince : Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts : and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night ; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight ; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bottom : We will meet ; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains ; be perfect : adieu.

Quince : At the Duke's oak we meet.

Bottom : Enough ; hold or cut bow-strings. [Exeunt.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

2...FALSTAFF AND THE ROBBERS

Eastcheap. A Room in the Boar's Head Tavern

Prince and Poins. *To them enter Falstaff, Gadshill, Bardolph, and Peto.*

Poins : Welcome, Jack : where hast thou been ?

Falstaff : A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too ! marry and amen ! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether-stocks, and mend them, and foot them too. A plague of all cowards ! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant ? [*He drinks.*]

Prince Henry : Didst thou never see Titan kiss a dish of butter ? pitiful-hearted Titan, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun's ! if thou didst, then behold that compound.

Falstaff : You rogue, here's lime in this sack too : there is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man : yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it ; a villanous coward. Go thy ways, old Jack ; die when thou wilt, if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring. There lives not three good men unchanged in England ; and one of them is fat, and grows old : God help the while ! a bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver ; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards, I say still.

Prince Henry : How now, wool-sack ? what mutter you ?

Falstaff : A king's son ! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath, and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales !

Prince Henry : Why, you scurvy round man ! what's the matter ?

Falstaff : Are not you a coward ? answer me to that : and Poins there ?

FALSTAFF AND THE ROBBERS

Poins : 'Zounds ! ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee.

Falstaff : I call thee coward ! I'll see thee damned ere I call thee coward : but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders—you care not who sees your back : call you that backing of your friends ? A plague upon such backing ! give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack : I am a rogue, if I drunk to-day.

Prince Henry : O villain ! thy lips are scarce wiped since thou drunkenest last.

Falstaff : All's one for that. (*He drinks.*) A plague of all cowards, still say I.

Prince Henry : What's the matter ?

Falstaff : What's the matter ? there be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

Prince Henry : Where is it, Jack ? where is it ?

Falstaff : Where is it ? taken from us it is : a hundred upon poor four of us.

Prince Henry : What, a hundred, man ?

Falstaff : I am a rogue, if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have 'scap'd by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose ; my buckler cut through and through ; my sword hack'd like a hand-saw—*ecce signum* ! I never dealt better since I was a man ; all would not do. A plague of all cowards ! Let them speak : if they speak more or less than truth, they are villains, and the sons of darkness.

Prince Henry : Speak, sirs ; how was it ?

Gadshill : We four set upon some dozen——

Falstaff : Sixteen, at least, my lord.

Gadshill : And bound them.

Peto : No, no, they were not bound.

Falstaff : You rogue, they were bound, every man of them ; or I am a Jew else, an Ebrew Jew.

Gadshill : As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us——

FALSTAFF AND THE ROBBERS

Falstaff : And unbound the rest, and then come in the other.

Prince Henry : What, fought you with them all ?

Falstaff : All ? I know not what you call all ; but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish : if there were not two or three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legged creature.

Poins : Pray God, you have not murdered some of them.

Falstaff : Nay, that's past praying for : for I have peppered two of them : two, I am sure, I have paid—two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal, if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward ; here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four rogues in buckram let drive at me——

Prince Henry : What, four ? thou saidst but two even now.

Falstaff : Four, Hal ; I told thee four.

Poins : Ay, ay, he said four.

Falstaff : These four came all a-front, and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado, but took all their seven points in my target, thus.

Prince Henry : Seven ? why, there were but four even now.

Falstaff : In buckram ?

Poins : Ay, four, in buckram suits.

Falstaff : Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

Prince Henry : Prithee, let him alone ; we shall have more anon.

Falstaff : Dost thou hear me, Hal ?

Prince Henry : Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

Falstaff : Do so, for it is worth the listening to. These nine in buckram, that I told thee of——

Prince Henry : So, two more already.

Falstaff : Their points being broken——

Poins : Down fell their hose.

Falstaff : Began to give me ground : but I followed me close, came in, foot and hand ; and, with a thought, seven of the eleven I paid.

Prince Henry : O monstrous ! eleven buckram men grown out of two !

FALSTAFF AND THE ROBBERS

Falstaff : But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves, in Kendal green, came at my back, and let drive at me ; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

Prince Henry : These lies are like their father that begets them ; gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brained guts ; thou knotty-pated fool ; thou obscene, greasy tallow-catch—

Falstaff : What, art thou mad ? art thou mad ? is not the truth the truth ?

Prince Henry : Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green, when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand ? come tell us your reason : what sayest thou to this ?

Poins : Come, your reason, Jack—your reason.

Falstaff : What, upon compulsion ? 'Zounds, and I were at the strappado, or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion ! if reasons were as plenty as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

Prince Henry : I'll be no longer guilty of this sin : this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horse-back-breaker, this huge hill of flesh—

Falstaff : Away, you starveling, you elf-skin, you dried neat's-tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stock-fish ! O, for breath to utter what is like thee !—you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing tuck—

Prince Henry : Well, breathe a while, and then to it again : and when thou hast tired thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

Poins : Mark, Jack.

Prince Henry : We two saw you four set on four : you bound them, and were masters of their wealth. Mark now, how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four ; and, with a word, out-faced you from your prize, and have it ; yea, and can shew it you here in the house : and, Falstaff, you carried your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roared for mercy, and still ran

FALSTAFF AND THE ROBBERS

and roared, as ever I heard bull-calf. What a slave art thou, to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight ! What trick, what device, what starting-hole, canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame ?

Poins : Come, let's hear, Jack ; what trick hast thou now ?

Falstaff : By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he that made ye. Why, hear ye, my masters : was it for me to kill the heir-apparent ? Should I turn upon the true prince ? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules ; but beware instinct ; the lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter ; I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself and thee, during my life ; I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors ; watch to-night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you ! What, shall we be merry ? shall we have a play extempore ?

Prince Henry : Content ; and the argument shall be, thy running away.

Falstaff : Ah ! no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me.

King Henry the Fourth, Part One.

3...FALSTAFF AND THE PRINCE

Eastcheap. A Room in the Boar's Head Tavern

Falstaff, the Prince, Poins, Hostess, Gadshill,
Bardolph, and Peto.

Falstaff : Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow, when thou comest to thy father : if thou love me, practise an answer.

Prince Henry : Do thou stand for my father, and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

Falstaff : Shall I ? content : this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

Prince Henry : Thy state is taken for a joined-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown !

Falstaff : Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack, to make mine eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept ; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in king Cambyeses' vein.

Prince Henry : Well, here is my leg.

Falstaff : And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

Hostess : This is excellent sport, i' faith.

Falstaff : Weep not, sweet queen ; for trickling tears are vain.

Hostess : O, the father, how he holds his countenance.

Falstaff : For God's sake, lords, convey my tristful queen ; For tears do stop the flood-gates of her eyes.

Hostess : O Jesu ! he doth it as like one of these harlotry players, as I ever see.

Falstaff : Peace, good pint-pot ; peace, good tickle-brain. Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied : for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet

FALSTAFF AND THE PRINCE

youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion ; but chiefly, a villanous trick of thine eye, and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point ; why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at ? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher, and eat blackberries ? a question not to be asked. Shall the son of England prove a thief, and take purses ? a question to be asked. There is a thing, Harry, which thou hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch : this pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile ; so doth the company thou keepest : for, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears ; not in pleasure, but in passion ; not in words only, but in woes also : And yet there is a virtuous man, whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

Prince Henry : What manner of man, an it like your majesty ?

Falstaff : A good portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent ; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage ; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r lady, inclining to threescore ; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff : if that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me ; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If, then, the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff : him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me, where hast thou been this month ?

Prince Henry : Dost thou speak like a king ? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

Falstaff : Depose me ? if thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker, or a poulter's hare.

Prince Henry : Well, here I am set.

Falstaff : And here I stand : judge, my masters.

Prince Henry : Now, Harry, whence come you ?

Falstaff : My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

FALSTAFF AND THE PRINCE

Prince Henry : The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

Falstaff : 'Sblood, my lord, they are false : nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

Prince Henry : Swearst thou, ungracious boy ? henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace : there is a devil haunts thee, in the likeness of an old fat man : a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuffed cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years ? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it ? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it ? wherein cunning, but in craft ? wherein crafty, but in villany ? wherein villanous, but in all things ? wherein worthy, but in nothing ?

Falstaff : I would your grace would take me with you ; whom means your grace ?

Prince Henry : That villanous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

Falstaff : My lord, the man I know.

Prince Henry : I know thou dost.

Falstaff : But to say I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old, the more the pity, his white hairs do witness it ; but that he is (saving your reverence) a misleader of youth, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked ! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned : if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord ; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins : but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company : banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

King Henry the Fourth, Part One.

4...THE DEATH OF OLD DOUBLE

Glostershire. Before Justice Shallow's House

Enter Shallow and Silence, meeting.

Shallow : Come on, come on, come on, sir ; give me your hand, sir, give me your hand, sir : an early stirrer, by the rood ! And how doth my good cousin Silence ?

Silence : Good morrow, good cousin Shallow.

Shallow : And how doth my cousin, your bedfellow ? and your fairest daughter and mine, my god-daughter Ellen ?

Silence : Alas, a black ousel, cousin Shallow !

Shallow : By yea and nay, sir, I dare say my cousin William is become a good scholar : he is at Oxford still, is he not ?

Silence : Indeed, sir, to my cost.

Shallow : A' must, then, to the inns o' court shortly. I was once of Clement's Inn, where I think they will talk of mad Shallow yet.

Silence : You were called " lusty Shallow " then, cousin.

Shallow : By the mass, I was called any thing ; and I would have done any thing indeed too, and roundly too. There was I, and little John Doit of Staffordshire, and black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man ; you had not four such swinge-bucklers in all the inns o' court again. Then was Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk.

Silence : This Sir John, cousin, that comes hither anon about soldiers ?

Shallow : The same Sir John, the very same. I see him break Skogan's head at the court-gate, when a' was a crack not thus high : and the very same day did I fight with one Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Jesu,

THE DEATH OF OLD DOUBLE

Jesu, the mad days that I have spent ! and to see how many of my old acquaintance are dead !

Silence : We shall all follow, cousin.

Shallow : Certain, 'tis certain ; very sure, very sure : death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all ; all shall die. How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair ?

Silence : By my troth, I was not there.

Shallow : Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet ?

Silence : Dead, sir.

Shallow : Jesu, Jesu, dead ! a' drew a good bow ; and dead ! a' shot a fine shoot : John a Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on his head. Dead ! a' would have clapped i' the clout at twelve score ; and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now ?

Silence : Thereafter as they be : a score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

Shallow : And is old Double dead ?

King Henry the Fourth, Part Two.

5...SHALLOW AND SILENCE

Glostershire. The Garden of Shallow's House

*Enter Falstaff, Shallow, Silence, Bardolph, the Page,
and Davy.*

Shallow : Nay, you shall see mine orchard ; where, in an arbour, we will eat a last year's pippin of my own graffing, with a dish of carraways, and so forth : come, cousin Silence ; and then to bed.

Falstaff : 'Fore God, you have here a goodly dwelling, and a rich.

Shallow : Barren, barren, barren ; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John : marry, good air. Spread, Davy ; spread, Davy : well said, Davy.

Falstaff : This Davy serves you for good uses ; he is your serving-man and your husband.

Shallow : A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet, Sir John. By the mass, I have drunk too much sack at supper : a good varlet. Now sit down, now sit down : come, cousin.

Silence : Ah, sirrah ! quoth-a, we shall (*singing*)

Do nothing but eat and make good cheer,
And praise heaven for the merry year ;
When flesh is cheap and females dear,
And lusty lads roam here and there
So merrily,
And ever among so merrily.

Falstaff : There's a merry heart ! Good master Silence, I'll give you a health for that anon.

Shallow : Give master Bardolph some wine, Davy.

Davy : Sweet sir, sit (*seating Bardolph and the Page at another table*) ; I'll be with you anon : most sweet sir,

SHALLOW AND SILENCE

sit. Master page, good master page, sit. Proface ! What you want in meat, we'll have in drink. But you must bear ; the heart's all. [Exit.

Shallow : Be merry, master Bardolph ; and my little soldier there, be merry.

Silence (singing) :

Be merry, be merry, my wife has all ;
For women are shrews, both short and tall ;
'Tis merry in hall when beards wag all,
And welcome merry Shrove-tide.
Be merry, be merry.

Falstaff : I did not think master Silence had been a man of this mettle.

Silence : Who, I ? I have been merry twice and once ere now.

Re-enter Davy.

Davy : There is a dish of leather-coats for you. [*Setting them before Bardolph.*

Shallow : Davy——

Davy : Your worship ? I'll be with you straight. (*To Bardolph*) A cup of wine, sir ?

Silence (singing) :

A cup of wine, that's brisk and fine,
And drink unto the leman mine ;
And a merry heart lives long-a.

Falstaff : Well said, master Silence.

Silence : An we shall be merry ; now comes in the sweet o' the night.

Falstaff : Health and long life to you, master Silence.

Silence (singing) :

Fill the cup, and let it come ;
I'll pledge you a mile to the bottom.

Shallow : Honest Bardolph, welcome : if thou wantest anything, and wilt not call, beshrew thy heart. Welcome, my little tiny thief (*to the Page*) ; and welcome, indeed, too.

SHALLOW AND SILENCE

I'll drink to master Bardolph, and to all the cavaleros about London.

Davy : I hope to see London once ere I die.

Bardolph : An I might see you there, Davy——

Shallow : By the mass, you'll crack a quart together.

Ha ! will you not, master Bardolph ?

Bardolph : Yes, sir, in a pottle-pot.

Shallow : By God's liggens, I thank thee : the knave will stick by thee, I can assure thee that : a' will not out ; he is true bred.

Bardolph : And I'll stick by him, sir.

Shallow : Why, there spoke a king. Lack nothing : be merry. (*Knocking heard.*) Look who's at door there. Ho ! who knocks ?

[*Exit Davy.*]

Falstaff : Why, now you have done me right. [*To Silence, who drinks a bumper.*]

Silence (*singing*) :

Do me right,
And dub me knight :
Samingo.

Is't not so ?

Falstaff : 'Tis so.

Silence : Is't so ? Why, then, say an old man can do somewhat.

Re-enter Davy.

Davy : An't please your worship, there's one Pistol come from the court with news.

Falstaff : From the court ! let him come in. (*Enter Pistol.*) How now, Pistol ?

Pistol : Sir John, God save you !

Falstaff : What wind blew you hither, Pistol ?

Pistol : Not the ill wind which blows no man to good. Sweet knight, thou art now one of the greatest men in this realm.

Silence : By'r lady, I think a' be, but goodman Puff of Barson.

Pistol : Puff !

SHALLOW AND SILENCE

Puff in thy teeth, most recreant coward base.

Sir John, I am thy Pistol and thy friend,

And helter-skelter have I rode to thee ;

And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,

And golden times, and happy news of price.

Falstaff : I pray thee now, deliver them like a man of this world.

Pistol : A foutre for the world, and worldlings base !
I speak of Africa and golden joys.

Falstaff : O base Assyrian knight, what is thy news ?
Let king Cophetua know the truth thereof.

Silence (*singing*) :

And Robin Hood, Scarlet, and John.

Pistol : Shall dunghill curs confront the Helicons ? And shall good news be baffled ? Then, Pistol, lay thy head in Furies' lap.

Shallow : Honest gentleman, I know not your breeding.

Pistol : Why then, lament therefore.

Shallow : Give me pardon, sir : if, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it there is but two ways, either to utter them, or to conceal them. I am, sir, under the king, in some authority.

Pistol : Under which king, Besonian ? speak, or die.

Shallow : Under king Harry.

Pistol : Harry the fourth ? or fifth ?

Shallow : Harry the fourth.

Pistol : A foutre for thine office.

Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is king ;

Harry the fifth's the man. I speak the truth :

When Pistol lies, do this ; and fig me, like

The bragging Spaniard.

Falstaff : What ! is the old king dead ?

Pistol : As nail in door : the things I speak are just.

Falstaff : Away, Bardolph ! saddle my horse. Master Robert Shallow, choose what office thou wilt in the land, 'tis thine. Pistol, I will double-charge thee with dignities.

SHALLOW AND SILENCE

Bardolph : O joyful day ! I would not take a knighthood for my fortune.

Pistol : What ! I do bring good news.

Falstaff : Carry master Silence to bed. Master Shallow, my lord Shallow, be what thou wilt, I am fortune's steward. Get on thy boots ; we'll ride all night. O, sweet Pistol ! Away, Bardolph ! (*Exit Bardolph.*) Come, Pistol, utter more to me ; and, withal, devise something to do thyself good. Boot, boot, master Shallow ; I know the young king is sick for me. Let us take any man's horses ; the laws of England are at my commandment. Blessed are they that have been my friends ; and woe to my lord chief justice !

Pistol : Let vultures vile seize on his lungs also !

“ Where is the life that late I led ? ” say they :

Why, here it is ; welcome these pleasant days ! [*Exeunt.*

King Henry the Fourth, Part Two.

6...TOUCHSTONE AND JAKUES

The Forest of Arden

Duke senior *and* Jaques.

Jaques : There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.

Enter Touchstone and Audrey.

Touchstone : Salutation and greeting to you all !

Jaques : Good my lord, bid him welcome : this is the motley-minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest : he hath been a courtier, he swears.

Touchstone : If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation. I have trod a measure ; I have flattered a lady ; I have been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy ; I have undone three tailors ; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

Jaques : And how was that ta'en up ?

Touchstone : Faith, we met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause.

Jaques : How seventh cause ? Good my lord, like this fellow.

Duke senior : I like him very well.

Touchstone : God 'ild you, sir ; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country couples, to swear and to forswear ; according as marriage binds and blood breaks : a poor virgin, sir, an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own ; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will : rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house ; as your pearl in your foul oyster.

Duke senior : By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.

Touchstone : According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

TOUCHSTONE AND JACQUES

Jaques : But for the seventh cause ; how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause ?

Touchstone : Upon a lie seven times removed—bear your body more seeming, Audrey—as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard : he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was : this is called the Retort Courteous. If I sent him word again, it was not well cut, he would send me word, he cut it to please himself : this is called the Quip Modest. If again, it was not well cut, he disabled my judgment : this is called the Reply Churlish. If again, it was not well cut, he would answer, I spake not true : this is called the Reproof Valiant. If again, it was not well cut, he would say, I lied : this is called the Countercheck Quarrelsome : and so to the Lie Circumstantial and Lie Direct.

Jaques : And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

Touchstone : I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct ; and so we measured swords and parted.

Jaques : Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie ?

Touchstone : O sir, we quarrel in print, by the book ; as you have books for good manners : I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous ; the second, the Quip Modest ; the third, the Reply Churlish ; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant ; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome ; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance ; the seventh, the Lie Direct. All these you may avoid but the Lie Direct ; and you may avoid that too with an “ if.” I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel ; but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an “ if,” as, “ If you said so, then I said so ” ; and they shook hands, and swore brothers. Your “ if ” is the only peacemaker ; much virtue in “ if.”

Jaques : Is not this a rare fellow, my lord ? He's as good at any thing, and yet a fool.

Duke senior. He uses his folly like a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

As You Like It.

7...BAITING MALVOLIO

Olivia's Garden

Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, *and* Fabian.

Sir Toby : Come thy ways, Signior Fabian.

Fabian : Nay, I'll come : if I lose a scruple of this sport, let me be boiled to death with melancholy.

Sir Toby : Wouldst thou not be glad to have the niggardly rascally sheep-biter come by some notable shame ?

Fabian : I would exult, man : you know, he brought me out o' favour with my lady about a bear-baiting here.

Sir Toby : To anger him we'll have the bear again : and we will fool him black and blue : shall we not, Sir Andrew ?

Sir Andrew : An we do not, it is pity of our lives.

Sir Toby : Here comes the little villain. (*Enter Maria.*) How now, my metal of India !

Maria : Get ye all three into the box-tree : Malvolio's coming down this walk : he has been yonder i' the sun practising behaviour to his own shadow this half hour : observe him for the love of mockery ; for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Close, in the name of jesting ! Lie thou there (*throws down a letter*) ; for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling. [*Exit.*

Enter Malvolio.

Malvolio : 'Tis but fortune ; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me : and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't ?

Sir Toby : Here's an overweening rogue !

Fabian : O, peace ! Contemplation makes a rare turkey-cock of him : how he jets under his advanced plumes !

BAITING MALVOLIO

Sir Andrew : 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue !

Sir Toby : Peace, I say.

Malvolio : To be count Malvolio !

Sir Toby : Ah, rogue.

Sir Andrew : Pistol him, pistol him.

Sir Toby : Peace, peace !

Malvolio : There is example for't ; the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe.

Sir Andrew : Fie on him, Jezebel !

Fabian : O, peace ! now he's deeply in : look how imagination blows him.

Malvolio : Having been three months married to her, sitting in my state——

Sir Toby : O, for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye !

Malvolio : Calling my officers about me, in my branched velvet gown ; having come from a day-bed, where I have left Olivia sleeping——

Sir Toby : Fire and brimstone !

Fabian : O, peace, peace !

Malvolio : And then to have the humour of state ; and after a demure travel of regard, telling them I know my place as I would they should do theirs, to ask for my kinsman Toby——

Sir Toby : Bolts and shackles !

Fabian : O peace, peace, peace ! now, now.

Malvolio : Seven of my people, with an obedient start, make out for him : I frown the while ; and perchance wind up my watch, or play with my—some rich jewel. Toby approaches ; courtesies there to me——

Sir Toby : Shall this fellow live ?

Fabian : Though our silence be drawn from us with cars, yet peace.

Malvolio : I extend my hand to him thus, quenching my familiar smile with an austere regard of control——

Sir Toby : And does not Toby take you a blow o' the lips then ?

Malvolio : Saying, "Cousin Toby, my fortunes having cast me on your niece give me this prerogative of speech "——

BAITING MALVOLIO

Sir Toby : What, what ?

Malvolio : “ You must amend your drunkenness.”

Sir Toby : Out, scab !

Fabian : Nay, patience, or we break the sinews of our plot.

Malvolio : “ Besides, you waste the treasure of your time with a foolish knight ”——

Sir Andrew : That’s me, I warrant you.

Malvolio : “ One Sir Andrew ”——

Sir Andrew : I knew ’twas I ; for many do call me fool.

Malvolio : What employment have we here ? [*Taking up the letter.*]

Fabian : Now is the woodcock near the gin.

Sir Toby : O, peace ! and the spirit of humours intimate reading aloud to him !

Malvolio : By my life, this is my lady’s hand ; these be her very C’s, her U’s and her T’s ; and thus makes she her great P’s. It is, in contempt of question, her hand.

Sir Andrew : Her C’s, her U’s and her T’s : why that ?

Malvolio (*reads*) : “ To the unknown beloved, this, and my good wishes : ”—her very phrases ! By your leave, wax. Soft ! and the impressure her Lucrece, with which she uses to seal : ’tis my lady. To whom should this be ?

Fabian : This wins him, liver and all.

Malvolio (*reads*) :

Jove knows I love :

But who ?

Lips do not move ;

No man must know.

“ No man must know.” What follows ? the numbers altered ! “ No man must know : ” if this should be thee, Malvolio ?

Sir Toby : Marry, hang thee, brock !

Malvolio (*reads*) :

I may command where I adore ;

But silence, like a Lucrece knife,

With bloodless stroke my heart doth gore :

M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.

BAITING MALVOLIO

Fabian : A fustian riddle !

Sir Toby : Excellent wench, say I.

Malvolio : “ M, O, A, I, doth sway my life.” Nay, but first, let me see, let me see, let me see.

Fabian : What dish o’ poison has she dressed him !

Sir Toby : And with what wing the staniel checks at it !

Malvolio : “ I may command where I adore.” Why, she may command me : I serve her ; she is my lady. Why, this is evident to any formal capacity ; there is no obstruction in this : and the end—what should that alphabetical position portend ? If I could make that resemble something in me—Softly ! M, O, A, I,—

Sir Toby : O, ay, make up that : he is now at a cold scent.

Fabian : Sowter will cry upon’t for all this, though it be as rank as a fox.

Malvolio : M,—Malvolio ; M,—why, that begins my name.

Fabian : Did not I say he would work it out ? the cur is excellent at faults.

Malvolio : M,—but then there’s no consonancy in the sequel ; that suffers under probation : A should follow, but O does.

Fabian : And O shall end, I hope.

Sir Toby : Ay, or I’ll cudgel him, and make him cry O !

Malvolio : And then I comes behind.

Fabian : Ay, an you had any eye behind you, you might see more detraction at your heels than fortunes before you.

Malvolio : M, O, A, I ; this simulation is not as the former : and yet, to crush this a little, it would bow to me, for every one of these letters are in my name. Soft ! here follows prose.

(*Reads*) “ If this fall into thy hand, revolve. In my stars I am above thee ; but be not afraid of greatness : some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon ’em. Thy fates open their hands ; let thy blood and spirit embrace them, and, to inure thyself to what thou art like to be, cast thy humble slough and appear fresh. Be opposite with a kinsman, surly with servants ; let thy

BAITING MALVOLIO

tongue tang arguments of state ; put thyself into the trick of singularity : she thus advises thee that sighs for thee. Remember who commended thy yellow stockings, and wished to see thee ever cross-gartered : I say, remember. Go to, thou art made, if thou desirest to be so ; if not, let me see thee a steward still, the fellow of servants, and not worthy to touch Fortune's fingers. Farewell. She that would alter services with thee.

The Fortunate-Unhappy."

Daylight and champain discovers not more : this is open. I will be proud, I will read politic authors, I will baffle Sir Toby, I will wash off gross acquaintances, I will point-devise the very man. I do not now fool myself, to let imagination jade me ; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me. She did commend my yellow stockings of late, she did praise my leg being cross-gartered ; and in this she manifests herself to my love, and with a kind of injunction drives me to these habits of her liking. I thank my stars I am happy. I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings, and cross-gartered, even with the swiftness of putting on. Jove and my stars be praised ! Here is yet a postscript.

(*Reads*) "Thou canst not choose but know who I am. If thou entertainest my love, let it appear in thy smiling ; thy smiles become thee well ; therefore in my presence still smile, dear my sweet, I prithee."

Jove, I thank thee : I will smile ; I will do everything that thou wilt have me. [*Exit.*

Fabian : I will not give my part of this sport for a pension of thousands to be paid from the Sophy.

Sir Toby : I could marry this wench for this device.

Sir Andrew : So could I too.

Sir Toby : And ask no other dowry with her but such another jest.

Sir Andrew : Nor I neither.

Fabian : Here comes my noble gull-catcher.

Re-enter Maria.

Sir Toby : Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck ?

BAITING MALVOLIO

Sir Andrew : Or o' mine either.

Sir Toby : Shall I play my freedom at tray-trip, and become thy bond slave ?

Sir Andrew : I' faith, or I either ?

Sir Toby : Why, thou hast put him in such a dream, that when the image of it leaves him he must run mad.

Maria : Nay, but say true ; does it work upon him ?

Sir Toby : Like aqua-vitae with a midwife.

Maria : If you will then see the fruits of the sport, mark his first approach before my lady : he will come to her in yellow stockings, and 'tis a colour she abhors, and cross-gartered, a fashion she detests ; and he will smile upon her, which will now be so unsuitable to her disposition, being addicted to a melancholy as she is, that it cannot but turn him into a notable contempt. If you will see it, follow me.

Sir Toby : To the gates of Tartar, thou most excellent devil of wit !

Sir Andrew : I'll make one too.

[*Exeunt.*
Twelfth Night.

FRANCIS BEAUMONT AND JOHN FLETCHER

Beaumont : 1584-1616.

Fletcher : 1579-1625.

8...THE CITIZEN AND HIS WIFE AT THE PLAY

INDUCTION

Several Gentlemen sitting on Stools upon the Stage. The Citizen, his Wife, and Ralph sitting below among the audience.

Enter Speaker of the Prologue.

Speaker of the Prologue : “ From all that’s near the court,
from all that’s great,
Within the compass of the city-walls,
We have now brought our scene——”

[Citizen leaps on the stage.

Citizen : Hold your peace, goodman boy !

Speaker of the Prologue : What do you mean, sir ?

Citizen : That you have no good meaning : this seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens ; and now you call your play *The London Merchant*. Down with your title, boy ! down with your title !

Speaker of the Prologue : Are you a member of the noble city ?

Citizen : I am.

Speaker of the Prologue : And a freeman ?

Citizen : Yea, and a grocer.

Speaker of the Prologue : So, grocer, then, by your sweet favour, we intend no abuse to the city.

Citizen : No, sir ? yes, sir : if you were not resolved to play the Jacks, what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters ? why could not you be contented, as well as others, with *The Legend of Whittington*, or *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham*, with the

THE CITIZEN AND HIS WIFE AT THE PLAY

building of the Royal Exchange, or The Story of Queen Eleanor, with the rearing of London Bridge upon Woolsacks?

Speaker of the Prologue : You seem to be an understanding man : what would you have us do, sir ?

Citizen : Why, present something notably in honour of the commons of the city.

Speaker of the Prologue : Why, what do you say to *The Life and Death of Fat Drake* ?

Citizen : I do not like that ; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

Speaker of the Prologue : Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since ; our play is ready to begin now.

Citizen : 'Tis all one for that ; I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

Speaker of the Prologue : What will you have him do ?

Citizen : Marry, I will have him——

Wife (below) : Husband, husband !

Ralph (below) : Peace, mistress.

Wife (below) : Hold thy peace, Ralph ; I know not what I do, I warrant ye. Husband, husband !

Citizen : What sayst thou, cony ?

Wife (below) : Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband ! let him kill a lion with a pestle !

Citizen : So he shall. I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

Wife (below) : Husband ! shall I come up, husband ?

Citizen : Aye, cony—Ralph, help your mistress this way. —Pray, gentlemen, make her a little room.—I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife : I thank you, sir.—So. [Wife comes upon the stage.

Wife : By your leave, gentlemen all ; I'm something troublesome : I'm a stranger here ; I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before ; but I should have seen *Jane Shore* once ; and my husband hath promised me, any time this twelvemonth, to carry me to *The Bold Beauchamps*, but in truth he did not. I pray you, bear with me.

Citizen : Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools, and then begin ; and let the grocer do rare things.

[Stools are brought.

THE CITIZEN AND HIS WIFE AT THE PLAY

Speaker of the Prologue : But, sir, we have never a boy to play him : every one hath a part already.

Wife : Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Ralph play him ! beshrew me, if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Citizen : Well remembered, wife.—Come up, Ralph.—I'll tell you, gentlemen ; let them but lend him a suit of reparel and necessities, and, by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged. [*Ralph comes on the stage.*]

Wife : I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparel.—I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true : he will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbours cry out on him ; he will fetch you a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we quake again : we'll fear our children with him ; if they be never so unruly, do but cry, “ Ralph comes, Ralph comes ! ” to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Ralph ; show the gentlemen what thou canst do ; speak a huffing part ; I warrant you, the gentlemen will accept of it.

Citizen : Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph : “ By Heavens, methinks, it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon ;
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,
Where never fathom-line touched any ground,
And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell.”

Citizen : How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you ?

Wife : Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Mucedorus, before the wardens of our company.

Citizen : Aye, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

Speaker of the Prologue : He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Citizen : In, Ralph ; in, Ralph ; and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lovest me. [*Exit Ralph.*]

Wife : I warrant, our Ralph will look finely when he's dressed.

Speaker of the Prologue : But what will you have it called ?

Citizen : *The Grocer's Honour.*

THE CITIZEN AND HIS WIFE AT THE PLAY

Speaker of the Prologue : Methinks *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* were better.

Wife : I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Citizen : Let it be so.—Begin, begin ; my wife and I will sit down.

Speaker of the Prologue : I pray you, do.

Citizen : What stately music have you ? you have shawms ?

Speaker of the Prologue : Shawms ! no.

Citizen : No ? I'm a thief, if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must needs have shawms : I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

Speaker of the Prologue : So you are like to be.

Citizen : Why, and so I will be : there's two shillings (*gives money*) ; let's have the waits of Southwark ; they are as rare fellows as any are in England ; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

Speaker of the Prologue : You shall have them. Will you sit down, then ?

Citizen : Aye.—Come, wife.

Wife : Sit you merry all, gentlemen ; I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease. [*Citizen and Wife sit down.*]

Speaker of the Prologue : “ From all that's near the court,
from all that's great

Within the compass of the city walls,

We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence

All private taxes, immodest phrases,

Whatever may but show like vicious !

For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,

But honest minds are pleased with honest things.”

Thus much for that we do ; but for Ralph's part you must answer for yourself.

Citizen : Take you no care for Ralph ; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you. [*Exit Speaker of the Prologue.*]

Wife : I' faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle.

SAMUEL PEPYS

1633-1703

9...MR. PEPYS MIGHTY MERRY

14th August, 1666. We had invited to a venison pasty Mr. Batelier and his sister Mary, Mrs. Mercer, her daughter Anne, Mr. Le Brun, and W. Hewer; and so we supped, and very merry. And then about nine o'clock to Mrs. Mercer's gate, where the fire and boys expected us, and her son had provided abundance of serpents and rockets; and there mighty merry (my Lady Pen and Peg going there with us, and Nan Wright) till about twelve at night, flinging our fireworks, and burning one another and the people over the way. And at last our businesses being most spent, we into Mrs. Mercer's, and there mighty merry, smutting one another with candle grease and soot, till most of us were like devils. And that being done, then we broke up, and to my house; and there I made them drink, and upstairs we went, and then fell into dancing (W. Batelier dancing well), and dressing, him and I and one Mr. Banister (who with his wife come over also with us), like women; and Mercer put on a suit of Tom's, like a boy, and mighty mirth we had. Mercer danced a jig; and Nan Wright and my wife and Peg Pen put on periwigs. Thus we spent till three or four in the morning, mighty merry; and then parted, and to bed.

15th August. Mighty sleepy; slept till past eight of the clock.

Diary.

10...MRS. PEPYS

Jan. 12, 1668-9. This evening I observed my wife mighty dull, and I myself was not mighty fond, because of some hard words she did give me at noon, out of a jealousy at my being abroad this morning, which, God knows, it was upon the business of the Office unexpectedly ; but I to bed, not thinking but she would come after me. But waking by and by, out of a slumber, which I usually fall into presently after my coming into the bed, I found she did not prepare to come to bed, but got fresh candles, and more wood for her fire, it being mighty cold, too. At this being troubled, I after a while prayed her to come to bed ; so, after an hour or two, she silent, and I now and then praying her to come to bed, she fell into a fury, that I was a rogue, and false to her. I did, as I might truly, deny it, and was mightily troubled, but all would not serve. At last, about one o'clock, she came to my side of the bed, and drew my curtain open, and with the tongs red hot at the ends, made as if she did design to pinch me with them, at which, in dismay, I rose up, and with a few words she laid them down ; and did by little and little, very sillily, let all the discourse fall ; and about two, but with much seeming difficulty, come to bed, and there lay well all night, and long in bed talking together, with much pleasure, it being, I know, nothing but her doubt of my going out yesterday, without telling her of my going, which did vex her, poor wretch ! last night, and I cannot blame her jealousy, though it do vex me to the heart.

Diary.

GEORGE VILLIERS, DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM

1628-1687

II...MR. BAYES

Scene : The Stage of a Theatre

Three Players are on the stage. To them enter Bayes, Johnson, and Smith.

Bayes : Come, come in, gentlemen. You're very welcome, Mr.—a—— Ha' you your part ready ?

First Player : Yes, sir.

Bayes : But do you understand the true humour of it ?

First Player : Ay, sir, pretty well.

Bayes : And Amaryllis, how does she do ? Does not her armour become her ?

Third Player : Oh, admirably !

Bayes : I'll tell you now a pretty conceit. What do you think I'll make 'em call her anon, in this play ?

Smith : What, I pray ?

Bayes : Why, I make 'em call her Armaryllis, because of her armour ; ha, ha, ha !

Johnson : That will be very well indeed.

Bayes : Ay, 'tis a pretty little rogue ; but—a—come, let's sit down. Look you, sirs, the chief hinge of this play, upon which the whole plot moves and turns, and that causes the variety of all the several accidents, which, you know, are the things in nature that make up the grand refinement of a play, is, that I suppose two kings of the same place ; as for example, at Brentford, for I love to write familiarly. Now the people having the same relations to 'em both, the same affections, the same duty, the same obedience, and all that, are divided among themselves in point of devoir and interest, how to behave themselves equally between 'em : these kings

MR. BAYES

differing sometimes in particular ; though, in the main, they agree. (I know not whether I make myself well understood.)

Johnson : I did not observe you, sir : pray say that again.

Bayes : Why, look you, sir (nay, I beseech you be a little curious in taking notice of this, or else you'll never understand my notion of the thing), the people being embarrass'd by their equal ties to both, and the sovereigns concern'd in a reciprocal regard, as well as to their own interest, as the good of the people, make a certain kind of a—you understand me—upon which, there do arise several disputes, turmoils, heart-burnings, and all that—in fine, you'll apprehend it better when you see it. [*Exit, to call the Players.*]

Smith : I find the author will be very much obliged to the players, if they can make any sense out of this.

Enter Bayes.

Bayes : Now, gentlemen, I would fain ask your opinion of one thing. I have made a prologue and an epilogue, which may both serve for either ; that is, the prologue for the epilogue, or the epilogue for the prologue ; (do you mark ?) nay, they may both serve too, egad, for any other play as well as this.

Smith : Very well ; that's indeed artificial.

Bayes : And I would fain ask your judgments, now, which of them would do best for the prologue ? for, you must know there is, in nature, but two ways of making very good prologues : the one is by civility, by insinuation, good language, and all that, to—a—in a manner, steal your plaudit from the courtesy of the auditors : the other, by making use of some certain personal things, which may keep a hank upon such censuring persons, as cannot otherwise, egad, in nature, be hindered from being too free with their tongues. To which end, my first prologue is, that I come out in a long black veil, and a great huge hangman behind me, with a furr'd cap, and his sword drawn ; and there tell 'em plainly, that if out of good-nature, they will not like my play, egad, I'll e'en kneel down, and he shall cut my head off. Whereupon they all clapping—a——

MR. BAYES

Smith : Ay, but suppose they don't.

Bayes : Suppose, sir, you may suppose what you please ; I have nothing to do with your suppose, sir ; nor am at all mortified at it ; not at all, sir ; egad, not one jot, sir. Suppose, quoth-a !—ha, ha, ha ! *[Walks away.]*

Johnson : Phoo ! prithee, Bayes, don't mind what he says ; he is a fellow newly come out of the country, he knows nothing of what's the relish here, of the town.

Bayes : If I writ, sir, to please the country, I should have follow'd the old plain way ; but I write for some persons of quality, and peculiar friends of mine, that understand what flame and power in writing is ; and they do me the right, sir, to approve of what I do.

Johnson : Ay, ay, they will clap, I warrant you ; never fear it.

Bayes : I'm sure the design's good ; that cannot be denied. And then, for the language, egad, I defy 'em all, in nature, to mend it. Besides, sir, I have printed above a hundred sheets of paper to insinuate the plot into the boxes ; and, withal, have appointed two or three dozen of my friends to be ready in the pit, who, I'm sure, will clap, and so the rest, you know, must follow ; and then, pray, sir, what becomes of your suppose ? Ha, ha, ha !

Johnson : Nay, if the business be so well laid, it cannot miss.

Bayes : I think so, sir ; and therefore would choose this to be the prologue. For, if I could engage 'em to clap, before they see the play, you know it would be so much the better ; because then they were engaged ; for let a man write ever so well, there are, nowadays, a sort of persons they call critics, that, egad, have no more wit in them than so many hobby-horses ; but they'll laugh at you, sir, and find fault, and censure things that, egad, I'm sure, they are not able to do themselves. A sort of envious persons that emulate the glories of persons of parts, and think to build their fame by calumniating of persons that, egad, to my knowledge, of all persons in the world, are, in nature, the persons that do as much despise all that as—a—— In fine, I'll say no more of 'em.

MR. BAYES

Johnson : Nay, you have said enough of 'em, in all conscience ; I'm sure more than they'll e'er be able to answer.

Bayes : Why, I'll tell you, sir, sincerely and *bona fide*, were it not for the sake of some ingenious persons and choice female spirits, that have a value for me, I would see 'em all hanged, egad, before I would e'er more set pen to paper, but let 'em live in ignorance like ingrates.

Johnson : Ay, marry ! that were a way to be revenged of 'em indeed ; and, if I were in your place, now, I would do so.

Bayes : No, sir ; there are certain ties upon me that I cannot be disengaged from ; otherwise, I would. But pray, sir, how do you like my hangman ?

Smith : By my troth, sir, I should like him very well.

Bayes : But how do you like it, sir ? (for, I see, you can judge) would you have it for a prologue, or the epilogue ?

Johnson : Faith, sir, 'tis so good, let it e'en serve for both.

Bayes : No, no ; that won't do. Besides, I have made another.

Johnson : What other, sir ?

Bayes : Why, sir, my other is Thunder and Lightning.

Johnson : That's greater ; I'd rather stick to that.

Bayes : Do you think so ? I'll tell you then ; tho' there have been many witty prologues written of late, yet, I think, you'll say this is a *non pareillo* : I'm sure nobody has hit upon it yet. For here, sir, I make my prologue to be a dialogue ; and as, in my first, you see, I strive to oblige the auditors by civility, by good-nature, good language, and all that ; so, in this, by the other way, *in terrorem*, I choose for the persons Thunder and Lightning. Do you apprehend the conceit ?

Johnson : Phoo, phoo ! then you have it cock-sure. They'll be hanged before they'll dare affront an author that has 'em at that lock.

Bayes : I have made, too, one of the most delicate dainty similes in the whole world, egad, if I knew but how to apply it.

Smith : Let's hear it, I pray you.

Bayes : 'Tis an allusion to love.

MR. BAYES

“ So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
Snuff up, and smell it gath’ring in the sky ;
Boar beckons sow to trot in chestnut groves,
And there consummate their unfinish’d loves :
Pensive in mud they wallow all alone,
And snore and gruntle to each other’s moan.”

How do you like it now, ha ?

Johnson : Faith, ’tis extraordinary fine ; and very applicable to Thunder and Lightning, methinks, because it speaks of a storm.

Bayes : Egad, and so it does, now I think on’t : Mr. Johnson, I thank you ; and I’ll put it in *profecto*. Come out, Thunder and Lightning.

The Rehearsal.

JONATHAN SWIFT

1667-1745

12...THE GRAND ACADEMY OF LAGADO

WE came at length to the house, which was indeed a noble structure, built according to the best rules of ancient architecture. The fountains, gardens, walks, avenues, and groves were all disposed with exact judgment and taste. I gave due praises to everything I saw, whereof his excellency took not the least notice till after supper, when, there being no third companion, he told me, with a very melancholy air, that he doubted he must throw down his houses in town and country, to rebuild them after the present mode ; destroy all his plantations, and cast others into such a form as modern usage required ; and give the same directions to all his tenants, unless he would submit to incur the censure of pride, singularity, affectation, ignorance, caprice, and perhaps increase his majesty's displeasure : that the admiration I appeared to be under would cease or diminish when he had informed me of some particulars which, probably, I never heard of at court—the people there being too much taken up in their own speculations to have regard to what passed here below.

The sum of his discourse was to this effect : that about forty years ago certain persons went up to Laputa, either upon business or diversion, and, after five months' continuance, came back with a very little smattering in mathematics, but full of volatile spirits, acquired in that airy region ; that these persons, upon their return, began to dislike the management of everything below, and fell into schemes of putting all arts, sciences, languages, and mechanics upon a new footing. To this end, they procured a royal patent for erecting an academy of projectors in Lagado ; and the humour prevailed so strongly among the people, that there

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is not a town of any consequence in the kingdom without such an academy. In these colleges the professors contrive new rules and methods of agriculture and building, and new instruments and tools for all trades and manufactures ; whereby, as they undertake, one man shall do the work of ten ; a palace may be built in a week, of materials so durable as to last for ever without repair ; all the fruits of the earth shall come to maturity at whatever season we think fit to choose, and increase a hundredfold more than they do at present ; with innumerable other happy proposals. The only inconvenience is, that none of these projects are yet brought to perfection ; and in the meantime the whole country lies miserably waste, the houses in ruins, and the people without food or clothes. By all which, instead of being discouraged, they are fifty times more violently bent upon prosecuting their schemes, driven equally on by hope and despair. That, as for himself, being not of an enterprising spirit, he was content to go on in the old forms, to live in the house his ancestors had built, and act as they did, in every part of life, without innovation ; that some few other persons of quality and gentry had done the same, but were looked on with an eye of contempt and ill-will, as enemies to art, ignorant, and ill commonwealth's men, preferring their own ease and sloth before the general improvement of their country.

His lordship added that he would not, by any further particulars, prevent the pleasure I should certainly take in viewing the grand academy, whither he was resolved I should go. He only desired me to observe a ruined building upon the side of a mountain about three miles distant, of which he gave me this account : that he had a very convenient mill within half a mile of his house, turned by a current from a large river, and sufficient for his own family, as well as a great number of his tenants ; that about seven years ago, a club of those projectors came to him with proposals to destroy this mill, and build another on the side of that mountain, on the long ridge whereof a long canal must be cut, for a repository of water, to be conveyed up by pipes

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and engines to supply the mill ; because the wind and air upon a height agitated the water, and thereby made it fitter for motion ; and because the water, descending down a declivity, would turn the mill with half the current of a river, whose course is more upon a level. He said that, being then not very well with the court, and pressed by many of his friends, he complied with the proposal ; and after employing a hundred men for two years, the work miscarried, the projectors went off, laying the blame entirely upon him, railing at him ever since, and putting others upon the same experiment, with equal assurance of success as well as equal disappointment.

In a few days we came back to town ; and his excellency, considering the bad character he had in the academy, would not go with me himself, but recommended me to a friend of his to bear me company thither. My lord was pleased to represent me as a great admirer of projects, and a person of much curiosity and easy belief ; which, indeed, was not without truth, for I had myself been a sort of projector in my younger days.

This academy is not an entire single building, but a continuation of several houses on both sides of a street, which, growing waste, was purchased and applied to that use.

I was received very kindly by the warden, and went for many days to the academy. Every room has in it one or more projectors ; and I believe I could not be in fewer than five hundred rooms.

The first man I saw was of a very meagre aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged, and singed in several places. His clothes, shirt, and skin were all of the same colour. He had been eight years upon a project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put in phials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in raw, inclement summers. He told me he did not doubt that in eight years more he should be able to supply the governor's gardens with sunshine at a reasonable rate ; but he complained that his stock was low, and entreated me to give him something as an encouragement to

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ingenuity, especially since this had been a very dear season for cucumbers. I made him a small present, for my lord had furnished me with money on purpose, because he knew their practice of begging from all who go to see them.

I saw another at work to calcine ice into gunpowder ; who likewise showed me a treatise he had written concerning the malleability of fire, which he intended to publish.

There was a most ingenious architect, who had contrived a new method of building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation, which he justified to me by the like practice of those two prudent insects the bee and the spider.

There was a man born blind, who had several apprentices in his own condition. Their employment was to mix colours for painters, which their master taught them to distinguish by feeling and smelling. It was indeed my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken. This artist is much encouraged and esteemed by the whole fraternity.

In another apartment I was highly pleased with a projector who had found a device of ploughing the ground with hogs to save the charges of ploughs, cattle, and labour. The method is this : In an acre of ground you bury, at six inches' distance and eight deep, a quantity of acorns, dates, chest-nuts, and other mast or vegetables whereof these animals are fondest ; then you drive six hundred of them into the field, where, in a few days, they will root up the whole ground in search of their food, and make it fit for sowing, at the same time manuring it with their dung. It is true, upon experiment, they found the charge and trouble very great, and they had little or no crop. However, it is not doubted that this invention may be capable of great improvement.

I went into another room, where the walls and ceilings were all hung round with cobwebs, except a narrow passage for the artist to go in and out. At my entrance he called aloud to me not to disturb his webs. He lamented the fatal

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mistake the world had been so long in of using silkworms, while we had such plenty of domestic insects who infinitely excelled the former, because they understood how to weave as well as spin. And he proposed further that, by employing spiders, the charge of dyeing silks should be wholly saved, whereof I was fully convinced when he showed me a vast number of flies most beautifully coloured, wherewith he fed his spiders, assuring us that the webs would take a tincture from them; and as he had them of all hues, he hoped to fit everybody's fancy, as soon as he could find proper food for the flies, of certain gums, oils, and other glutinous matter, to give a strength and consistence to the threads.

There was an astronomer, who had undertaken to place a sun-dial upon the great weather-cock on the town-house, by adjusting the annual and diurnal motions of the earth and sun, so as to answer and coincide with all accidental turnings of the wind.

I visited many other apartments, but shall not trouble my reader with all the curiosities I observed, being studious of brevity.

Gulliver's Travels.

WILLIAM CONGREVE

1670-1729

13...MILLAMANT

Mirabell and Mrs. Fainall. To them Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, and Mincing.

Mirabell : Here she comes i' faith full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders—Ha, no, I cry her mercy.

Mrs. Fainall : I see but one poor empty sculler ; and he tows her woman after him.

Mirabell : You seem to be unattended, madam,—you used to have the *beau-mond* throng after you ; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Witwoud : Like moths about a candle—I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Millamant : O I have denied myself airs to-day. I have walked as fast through the crowd——

Witwoud : As a favourite just disgraced ; and with as few followers.

Millamant : Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes : for I am as sick of 'em——

Witwoud : As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it, madam, though 'tis against myself.

Millamant : Yet again ! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Witwoud : Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fainall : But, dear Millamant, why were you so long ?

Millamant : Long ! Lord, have I not made violent haste ? I have asked every living thing I met for you ; I have enquired after you, as after a new fashion.

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Witwoud : Madam, truce with your similitudes—No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mirabell : By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Witwoud : Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs. Fainall : You were dressed before I came abroad.

Millamant : Ay, that's true—O but then I had—Mincing, what had I ? Why was I so long ?

Mincing : O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a packet of letters.

Millamant : O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—nobody knows how to write letters ; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why—they serve one to pin up one's hair.

Witwoud : Is that the way ? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters ? I find I must keep copies.

Millamant : Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I tried once, Mincing.

Mincing : O mem, I shall never forget it.

Millamant : Ay, poor Mincing tift and tift all the morning.

Mincing : 'Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem. And all to no purpose. But when your laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

Witwoud : Indeed, so crips ?

Mincing : You're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

Millamant : Mirabell, did you take exceptions last night ? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't I'm angry—no, now I think on't I'm pleased—for I believe I gave you some pain.

Mirabell : Does that please you ?

Millamant : Infinitely ; I love to give pain.

Mirabell : You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature ; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Millamant : O I ask your pardon for that—one's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty, one

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parts with one's power ; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mirabell : Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be? Nay, 'tis true : you are no longer handsome when you've lost your lover ; your beauty dies upon the instant : for beauty is the lover's gift, 'tis he bestows your charms—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it : for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Millamant : O the vanity of these men ! Fainall, d'ye hear him ? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome ! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give ? Why one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases : and then if one pleases one makes more.

Witwoud : Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Millamant : One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo : they can but reflect what we look and say ; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mirabell : Yet, to those two vain empty things you owe two of the greatest pleasures of your life.

Millamant : How so ?

Mirabell : To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised ; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Witwoud : But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play ; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Millamant : O fiction ; Fainall, let us leave these men.

The Way of the World.

JOSEPH ADDISON

1672-1719

14...SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

I AM always very well pleased with a country Sunday ; and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilising of mankind. It is certain the country-people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country-fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the Change ; the whole parish-politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger being a good churchman has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing : he has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular ; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer book : and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the psalms ; upon which they now

SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions: sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing-psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces "Amen" three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that, the general good sense and worthiness of his character, make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then enquires how such an one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement ; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place ; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire, and the squire to be revenged on the parson never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers ; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year ; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people ; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning ; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

The Spectator.

HENRY FIELDING

1707-1754

15...PARSON ADAMS

THE night was very dark in which our friends began their journey ; however, they made such expedition, that they soon arrived at an inn which was at seven miles' distance. Here they unanimously consented to pass the evening, Mr. Adams being now as dry as he was before he had set out on his embassy.

This inn, which indeed we might call an ale-house, had not the words, *The New Inn*, been writ on the sign, afforded them no better provision than bread and cheese and ale ; on which, however, they made a very comfortable meal ; for hunger is better than a French cook.

They had no sooner supped, than Adams, returning thanks to the Almighty for his food, declared he had eat his homely commons with much greater satisfaction than his splendid dinner ; and expressed great contempt for the folly of mankind, who sacrificed their hopes of heaven to the acquisition of vast wealth, since so much comfort was to be found in the humblest state and the lowest provision. " Very true, sir," says a grave man who sat smoking his pipe by the fire, and who was a traveller as well as himself. " I have often been as much surprised as you are, when I consider the value which mankind in general set on riches, since every day's experience shows us how little is in their power ; for what, indeed, truly desirable, can they bestow on us ? Can they give beauty to the deformed, strength to the weak, or health to the infirm ? Surely if they could we should not see so many ill-favoured faces haunting the assemblies of the great, nor would such numbers of feeble wretches languish in their coaches and palaces. No, not the wealth of a kingdom can purchase any paint to dress pale Ugliness

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in the bloom of that young maiden, nor any drugs to equip Disease with the vigour of that young man. Do not riches bring us to solicitude instead of rest, envy instead of affection, and danger instead of safety? Can they prolong their own possession, or lengthen his days who enjoys them? So far otherwise, that the sloth, the luxury, the care which attend them, shorten the lives of millions, and bring them with pain and misery to an untimely grave. Where, then, is their value if they can neither embellish nor strengthen our forms, sweeten nor prolong our lives?—Again: Can they adorn the mind more than the body? Do they not rather swell the heart with vanity, puff up the cheeks with pride, shut our ears to every call of virtue, and our bowels to every motive of compassion?”

“Give me your hand, brother,” said Adams, in a rapture, “for I suppose you are a clergyman.”—“No, truly,” answered the other (indeed, he was a priest of the Church of Rome; but those who understand our laws will not wonder he was not over-ready to own it).—“Whatever you are,” cries Adams, “you have spoken my sentiments: I believe I have preached every syllable of your speech twenty times over; for it hath always appeared to me easier for a cable-rope (which by the way is the true rendering of that word we have translated camel) to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven.” “That, sir,” said the other, “will be easily granted you by divines, and is deplorably true; but as the prospect of our good at a distance doth not so forcibly affect us, it might be of some service to mankind to be made thoroughly sensible—which I think they might be with very little serious attention—that even the blessings of this world are not to be purchased with riches; a doctrine, in my opinion, not only metaphysically, but, if I may so say, mathematically demonstrable; and which I have been always so perfectly convinced of that I have a contempt for nothing so much as for gold.”

Adams now began a long discourse: but as most which he said occurs among many authors who have treated this subject, I shall omit inserting it. During its continuance

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Joseph and Fanny retired to rest, and the host likewise left the room. When the English parson had concluded, the Romish resumed the discourse, which he continued with great bitterness and invective ; and at last ended by desiring Adams to lend him eighteen-pence to pay his reckoning ; promising, if he never paid him, he might be assured of his prayers. The good man answered that eighteen-pence would be too little to carry him any very long journey ; that he had half a guinea in his pocket, which he would divide with him. He then fell to searching his pockets, but could find no money ; for indeed the company with whom he dined had passed one jest upon him which we did not then enumerate, and had picked his pocket of all that treasure which he had so ostentatiously produced.

“ Bless me ! ” cried Adams, “ I have certainly lost it ; I can never have spent it. Sir, as I am a Christian, I had a whole half-guinea in my pocket this morning, and have not now a single halfpenny of it left. Sure the devil must have taken it from me ! ”—“ Sir,” answered the priest, smiling, “ you need make no excuses ; if you are not willing to lend me the money, I am contented.”—“ Sir,” cries Adams, “ if I had the greatest sum in the world—aye, if I had ten pounds about me—I would bestow it all to rescue any Christian from distress. I am more vexed at my loss on your account than my own. Was ever anything so unlucky ? Because I have no money in my pocket I shall be suspected to be no Christian.”—“ I am more unlucky,” quoth the other, “ if you are as generous as you say ; for really a crown would have made me happy, and conveyed me in plenty to the place I am going, which is not above twenty miles off, and where I can arrive by to-morrow night. I assure you I am not accustomed to travel penniless. I am but just arrived in England ; and we were forced by a storm in our passage to throw all we had overboard. I don’t suspect but this fellow will take my word for the trifle I owe him ; but I hate to appear so mean as to confess myself without a shilling to such people ; for these, and indeed too many others, know little difference in their estimation between a beggar and a

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thief." However, he thought he should deal better with the host that evening than the next morning : he therefore resolved to set out immediately, notwithstanding the darkness ; and accordingly, as soon as the host returned, he communicated to him the situation of his affairs ; upon which the host, scratching his head, answered, " Why I do not know, master ; if it be so, and you have no money, I must trust, I think, though I had rather always have ready money if I could ; but, marry, you look like so honest a gentleman that I don't fear your paying me if it was twenty times as much." The priest made no reply, but, taking leave of him and Adams, as fast as he could, not without confusion, and perhaps with some distrust of Adams's sincerity, departed.

He was no sooner gone than the host fell a-shaking his head, and declared, if he had suspected the fellow had no money, he would not have drawn him a single drop of drink, saying he despaired of ever seeing his face again, for that he looked like a confounded rogue. " Rabbit the fellow," cries he, " I thought, by his talking so much about riches, that he had a hundred pounds at least in his pocket."

Adams chid him for his suspicions, which, he said, were not becoming a Christian ; and then, without reflecting on his loss, or considering how he himself should depart in the morning, he retired to a very homely bed, as his companions had before ; however, health and fatigue gave them a sweeter repose than is often in the power of velvet and down to bestow.

Joseph Andrews.

16...PARTRIDGE AT THE PLAY

MR. JONES . . . being, at last, in a state of good spirits, from the last-mentioned considerations, he agreed to carry an appointment, which he had before made, into execution : this was, to attend Mrs. Miller, and her youngest daughter, into the gallery at the playhouse, and to admit Mr. Partridge as one of the company : for as Jones had really that taste for humour which many affect, he expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge ; from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved indeed, but likewise unadulterated, by art. In the first row, then, of the first gallery, did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played, he said, " It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out." While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs. Miller, " Look, look, madam, the very picture of the man in the end of the Common-Prayer Book before the gunpowder treason service." Nor could he help observing, with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, " That here were candles enough burnt in one night, to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelve-month."

As soon as the play, which was *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost ; upon which he asked Jones, " What man that was in the strange dress ; something," said he, " like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armour, is it ? " Jones answered, " That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied with a smile, " Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should

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know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighbourhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick, which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage? "O la! sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything; for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why, who," cries Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me coward if you will, but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life. Ay, ay: go along with you: Ay, to be sure! Who's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such fool-hardiness! Whatever happens, it is good enough for you!—Follow you? I'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is the devil—for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases.—Oh! here he is again.—No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried, "Hush, hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it, but to be sure, it is natural to be surprised at such things, though I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the ghost that surprised me, neither; for I should have known that

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to have been only a man in a strange dress ; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me.” “ And dost thou imagine, then, Partridge,” cries Jones, “ that he was really frightened ? ” “ Nay, sir,” said Partridge, “ did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father’s spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case ?—But hush ! O la ! what noise is that ? There he is again.—Well to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are.” Then turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, “ Ay, you may draw your sword ; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil ? ”

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses ; nor could he help observing upon the king’s countenance. “ Well,” said he, “ how people may be deceived by faces ! *Nulla fides fronti* is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king’s face, that he had ever committed a murder ? ” He then inquired after the ghost ; but Jones, who intended that he should be surprised, gave him no other satisfaction, than, “ that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire.”

Partridge sat in a fearful expectation of this ; and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cries out, “ There, sir, now ; what say you now ? is he frightened now or no ? As much frightened as you think me, and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as what’s his name, squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me ! what’s become of the spirit ? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth.” “ Indeed, you saw right,” answered Jones. “ Well, well,” cries Partridge, “ I know it is only a play : and besides, if there was anything in all this, Madam Miller would not laugh so ; for as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person.—There, there—Ay,

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no wonder you are in such a passion, shake the vile wicked wretch to pieces. If she was my own mother, I would serve her so. To be sure all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings.—Ay, go about your business, I hate the sight of you.”

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play, which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him ; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it, than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her, “ If she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched ; though he is,” said he, “ a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for, as that wicked man there, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he runs away ; for your sake I’ll never trust an innocent face again.”

The grave digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, “ That it was one of the most famous burial-places about town.” “ No wonder, then,” cries Partridge, “ the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse grave-digger. I had a sexton, when I was a clerk, that should have dug three graves while he was digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand. Ay, ay, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe.” Upon Hamlet’s taking up the skull, he cried out, “ Well ! it is strange to see how fearless some men are : I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account.—He seemed frightened enough, too, at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*”

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him, “ Which of the players he had liked best ? ” To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, “ The king, without doubt.” “ Indeed, Mr. Partridge,” says Mrs.

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Miller, "you are not of the same opinion with the town ; for they are all agreed, that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player !" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer, "why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, Lord help me, any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me ; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country ; and the king for my money ; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other.—Anybody may see he is an actor."

While Mrs. Miller was thus engaged in conversation with Partridge, a lady came up to Mr. Jones, whom he immediately knew to be Mrs. Fitzpatrick. She said she had seen him from the other part of the gallery, and had taken that opportunity of speaking to him, as she had something to say, which might be of great service to himself. She then acquainted him with her lodgings, and made him an appointment the next day in the morning ; which, upon recollection, she presently changed to the afternoon ; at which time Jones promised to attend her.

Thus ended the adventure at the play-house ; where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones and Mrs. Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said than to anything that passed on the stage.

He durst not go to bed all that night, for fear of the ghost ; and for many nights after sweated two or three hours before he went to sleep, with the same apprehension, and waked several times in great horrors, crying out, "Lord have mercy upon us ! there it is."

Tom Jones.

LAURENCE STERNE

1713-1768

17...MY UNCLE TOBY AND CORPORAL TRIM

WHEN a man gives himself up to the government of a ruling passion,—or, in other words, when his HOBBY-HORSE grows headstrong,—farewell cool reason and fair discretion !

My uncle *Toby's* wound was near well, and as soon as the surgeon recovered his surprise, and could get leave to say as much—he told him, 'twas just beginning to incarnate ; and that if no fresh exfoliation happened, which there was no sign of,—it would be dried up in five or six weeks. The sound of as many Olympiads, twelve hours before, would have conveyed an idea of shorter duration to my uncle *Toby's* mind.—The succession of his ideas was now rapid,—he broiled with impatience to put his design into execution ;—and so, without consulting farther with any soul living,—which, by the bye, I think is right, when you are pre-determined to take no one soul's advice,—he privately ordered *Trim*, his man, to pack up a bundle of lint and dressings, and hire a chariot-and-four to be at the door exactly by twelve o'clock that day, when he knew my father would be upon Change.—So leaving a bank-note upon the table for the surgeon's care of him, and a letter of tender thanks for his brother's—he packed up his maps, his books of fortification, his instruments, &c., and by the help of a crutch on one side, and *Trim* on the other,—my uncle *Toby* embarked for *Shandy-Hall*.

The reason, or rather the rise of this sudden demigration was as follows :

The table in my uncle *Toby's* room, and at which, the night before this change happened, he was sitting with his maps, &c., about him—being somewhat of the smallest, for that infinity of great and small instruments of knowledge

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which usually lay crowded upon it—he had the accident, in reaching over for his tobacco-box, to throw down his compasses, and in stooping to take the compasses up, with his sleeve he threw down his case of instruments and snuffers;—and as the dice took a run against him, in his endeavouring to catch the snuffers in falling,—he thrust Monsieur *Blondel* off the table, and Count *de Pagan* o'top of him.

'Twas to no purpose for a man, lame as my uncle *Toby* was, to think of redressing these evils by himself,—he rung his bell for his man *Trim*;—*Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*, prithee see what confusion I have here been making—I must have some better contrivance, *Trim*.—Can'st not thou take my rule, and measure the length and breadth of this table, and then go and bespeak me one as big again?—Yes, an' please your Honour, replied *Trim*, making a bow; but I hope your Honour will be soon well enough to get down to your country-seat,—where, as your Honour takes so much pleasure in fortification, we could manage this matter to a T.

I must here inform you, that this servant of my uncle *Toby's*, who went by the name of *Trim*, had been a corporal in my uncle's own company,—his real name was *James Butler*,—but having got the nick-name of *Trim* in the regiment, my uncle *Toby*, unless when he happened to be very angry with him, would never call him by any other name.

The poor fellow had been disabled for the service, by a wound on his left knee by a musket-bullet, at the battle of *Landen*, which was two years before the affair of *Namur*;—and as the fellow was well-beloved in the regiment, and a handy fellow into the bargain, my uncle *Toby* took him for his servant; and of an excellent use was he, attending my uncle *Toby* in the camp and in his quarters as a valet, groom, barber, cook, sempster, and nurse; and indeed, from first to last, waited upon him and served him with great fidelity and affection.

My uncle *Toby* loved the man in return, and what attached him more to him still, was the similitude of their

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knowledge.—For Corporal *Trim* (for so, for the future, I shall call him), by four years occasional attention to his Master's discourse upon fortified towns, and the advantage of prying and peeping continually into his master's plans, &c., exclusive and besides what he gained HOBBY-HORSICALLY, as a body-servant, *Non Hobby Horsical per se*;—had become no mean proficient in the science; and was thought, by the cook and chamber-maid, to know as much of the nature of strongholds as my uncle *Toby* himself.

I have but one more stroke to give to finish Corporal *Trim's* character,—and it is the only dark line in it.—The fellow loved to advise,—or rather to hear himself talk; his carriage, however, was so perfectly respectful, 'twas easy to keep him silent when you had him so; but set his tongue a-going,—you had no hold of him—he was voluble;—the eternal interlardings of *your Honour*, with the respectfulness of Corporal *Trim's* manner, interceding so strong in behalf of his elocution—that though you might have been incommoded,—you could not well be angry. My uncle *Toby* was seldom either the one or the other with him,—or, at least, this fault, in *Trim*, broke no squares with them. My uncle *Toby*, as I said, loved the man;—and besides, as he ever looked upon a faithful servant,—but as a humble friend,—he could not bear to stop his mouth.—Such was Corporal *Trim*.

If I durst presume, continued *Trim*, to give your Honour my advice, and speak my opinion in this matter.—Thou art welcome, *Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*—speak,—speak what thou thinkest upon the subject, man, without fear. Why then, replied *Trim* (not hanging his ears and scratching his head like a country lout, but) stroking his hair back from his forehead, and standing erect as before his division,—I think, quoth *Trim*, advancing his left, which was his lame leg, a little forwards,—and pointing with his right hand open towards a map of *Dunkirk*, which was pinned against the hangings,—I think, quoth Corporal *Trim*, with humble submission to your Honour's better judgment,—that these ravelins, bastions, curtains, and hornworks, make but a poor,

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contemptible, fiddle-faddle piece of work of it here upon paper, compared to what your Honour and I could make of it were we in the country by ourselves, and had but a rood, or a rood and a half of ground to do what we pleased with : As summer is coming on, continued *Trim*, your Honour might sit out of doors, and give me the nography—(Call it ichnography, quoth my uncle)—of the town or citadel, your Honour was pleased to sit down before—and I will be shot by your Honour upon the glacis of it, if I did not fortify it to your Honour's mind.—I dare say thou would'st, *Trim*, quoth my uncle.—For if your Honour, continued the Corporal, could but mark me the polygon, with its exact lines and angles—— That I could do very well, quoth my uncle.—I would begin with the fossé, and if your Honour could tell me the proper depth and breadth—— I can to a hair's breadth, *Trim*, replied my uncle.—I would throw out the earth upon this hand towards the town for the scarp,—and on that hand towards the campaign for the counter-scarp.—Very right, *Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby* :— And when I had sloped them to your mind,—an' please your Honour, I would face the glacis, as the finest fortifications are done in *Flanders*, with sods,—and as your Honour knows they should be,—and I would make the walls and parapets with sods too.—The best engineers call them gazons, *Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*.—Whether they are gazons or sods, is not much matter, replied *Trim* ; your Honour knows they are ten times beyond a facing either of brick or stone.—I know they are, *Trim*, in some respects,— quoth my uncle *Toby*, nodding his head ;—for a cannon-ball enters into the gazon right onwards without bringing any rubbish down with it, which might fill the fossé (as was the case at *St. Nicholas's* gate), and facilitate the passage over it.

Your Honour understands these matters, replied Corporal *Trim*, better than any officer in his Majesty's service ;—but would your Honour please to let the bespeaking of the table alone, and let us but go into the country, I would work under your Honour's direction like a horse, and make fortifications for you something like a tansy, with all their

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batteries, saps, ditches, and palisadoes, that it should be worth all the world's riding twenty miles to go and see it.

My uncle *Toby* blushed as red as scarlet as *Trim* went on ;—but it was not a blush of guilt,—of modesty,—or of anger—it was a blush of joy ;—he was fired with Corporal *Trim*'s project and description.—*Trim* ! said my uncle *Toby*, thou hast said enough.—We might begin the campaign, continued *Trim*, on the very day that his Majesty and the Allies take the field, and demolish them town by town as fast as——*Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*, say no more. Your Honour, continued *Trim*, might sit in your arm-chair (pointing to it) this fine weather, giving me your orders, and I would——Say no more, *Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*.—Besides, your Honour would get not only pleasure and good pastime,—but good air, and good exercise, and good health,—and your Honour's wound would be well in a month. Thou hast said enough, *Trim*,—quoth my uncle *Toby* (putting his hand into his breeches-pocket)—I like thy project mightily.—And if your Honour pleases, I'll this moment go and buy a pioneer's spade to take down with us, and I'll bespeak a shovel and a pick-axe, and a couple of —— Say no more, *Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*, leaping up upon one leg, quite overcome with rapture,—and thrusting a guinea into *Trim*'s hand,—*Trim*, said my uncle *Toby*, say no more ;—but go down, *Trim*, this moment, my lad, and bring up my supper this instant.

Trim ran down and brought up his master's supper,—to no purpose :—*Trim*'s plan of operation ran so in my uncle *Toby*'s head, he could not taste it.—*Trim*, quoth my uncle *Toby*, get me to bed.—'Twas all one.—Corporal *Trim*'s description had fired his imagination ;—my uncle *Toby* could not shut his eyes.—The more he considered it, the more bewitching the scene appeared to him ;—so that, two full hours before day-light, he had come to a final determination, and had concerted the whole plan of his and Corporal *Trim*'s decampment.

My uncle *Toby* had a little neat country-house of his own, in the village where my father's estate lay at *Shandy*, which

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had been left him by an old uncle, with a small estate of about one hundred pounds a-year. Behind this house, and contiguous to it, was a kitchen garden of about half an acre ; and at the bottom of the garden, and cut off from it by a tall yew hedge, was a bowling-green, containing just about as much ground as Corporal *Trim* wished for ;—so that as *Trim* uttered the words, “ A rood and a half of ground to do what they would with,”—this identical bowling-green instantly presented itself, and became curiously painted all at once, upon the retina of my uncle *Toby*’s fancy ;—which was the physical cause of making him change colour, or at least of heightening his blush, to that immoderate degree I spoke of.

Never did lover post down to a beloved mistress with more heat and expectation than my uncle *Toby* did, to enjoy this self-same thing in private ;—I say in private ;—for it was sheltered from the house, as I told you, by a tall yew hedge, and was covered on the other three sides, from mortal sight, by rough holly and thick-set flowering shrubs : —so that the idea of not being seen, did not a little contribute to the idea of pleasure pre-conceived in my uncle *Toby*’s mind.—Vain thought ! however thick it was planted about, —or private soever it might seem,—to think, dear uncle *Toby*, of enjoying a thing which took up a whole rood and a half of ground,—and not have it known !

How my uncle *Toby* and Corporal *Trim* managed this matter,—with the history of their campaigns, which were no way barren of events,—may make no uninteresting under-plot in the epitasis and working-up of this drama.—At present the scene must drop.

Tristram Shandy.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT

1721-1771

18...COMMODORE TRUNNION'S WEDDING

THE fame of this extraordinary conjunction spread all over the county ; and on the day appointed for their spousals, the church was surrounded by an inconceivable multitude. The commodore, to give a specimen of his gallantry, by the advice of his friend Hatchway, resolved to appear on horseback on the grand occasion, at the head of all his male attendants, whom he had rigged with the white shirts and black caps formerly belonging to his barge's crew ; and he bought a couple of hunters for the accommodation of himself and his lieutenant. With this equipage then he set out from the garrison for the church, after having dispatched a messenger to apprise the bride that he and his company were mounted ; whereupon she got immediately into the coach, accompanied by her brother and his wife, and drove directly to the place of assignation, where several pews were demolished, and divers persons almost pressed to death, by the eagerness of the crowd that broke in to see the ceremony performed. Thus arrived at the altar, and the priest in attendance, they waited a whole half hour for the commodore, at whose slowness they began to be under some apprehension, and accordingly dismissed a servant to quicken his pace. The valet having rode something more than a mile, espied the whole troop disposed in a long field, crossing the road obliquely, and headed by the bridegroom and his friend Hatchway, who, finding himself hindered by a hedge from proceeding farther in the same direction, fired a pistol, and stood over to the other side, making an obtuse angle with the line of his former course ; and the rest of the squadron followed his example, keeping always in the rear of each other, like a flight of wild geese.

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Surprised at this strange method of journeying, the messenger came up, and told the commodore that his lady and her company expected him in the church, where they had tarried a considerable time, and were beginning to be very uneasy at his delay ; and therefore desired he would proceed with more expedition. To this message Mr. Trunnion replied, "Hark ye, brother, don't you see we make all possible speed ? go back, and tell those who sent you, that the wind has shifted since we weighed anchor, and that we are obliged to make very short trips in tacking, by reason of the narrowness of the channel ; and that, as we lie within six points of the wind, they must make some allowance for variation and leeway." "Lord, sir !" said the valet, "what occasion have you to go zigzag in that manner ? Do but clap spurs to your horses, and ride straight forward, and I'll engage you shall be at the church porch in less than a quarter of an hour." "What ! right in the wind's eye ?" answered the commander, "ahey ! brother, where did you learn your navigation ? Hawser Trunnion is not to be taught at this time of day how to lie his course, or keep his own reckoning. And as for you, brother, you know best the trim of your own frigate." The courier finding he had to do with people who would not be easily persuaded out of their own opinions, returned to the temple, and made a report of what he had seen and heard, to the no small consolation of the bride, who had begun to discover some signs of disquiet. Composed, however, by this piece of intelligence, she exerted her patience for the space of another half hour, during which period, seeing no bridegroom arrive, she was exceedingly alarmed ; so that all the spectators could easily perceive her perturbation, which manifested itself in frequent palpitations, heart-heavings, and alterations of countenance, in spite of the assistance of a smelling-bottle, which she incessantly applied to her nostrils.

Various were the conjectures of the company on this occasion. Some imagined he had mistaken the place of rendezvous, as he had never been at church since he first

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settled in that parish ; others believed he had met with some accident, in consequence of which his attendants had carried him back to his own house ; and a third set, in which the bride herself was thought to be comprehended, could not help suspecting that the commodore had changed his mind. But all these suppositions, ingenious as they were, happened to be wide of the true cause that detained him, which was no other than this : the commodore and his crew had, by dint of turning, almost weathered the parson's house that stood to windward of the church, when the notes of a pack of hounds unluckily reached the ears of the two hunters which Trunnion and the lieutenant bestrode. These fleet animals no sooner heard the enlivening sound, than, eager for the chase, they sprung away all of a sudden, and straining every nerve to partake of the sport, flew across the fields with incredible speed, over-leaped hedges and ditches, and everything in their way, without the least regard to their unfortunate riders. The lieutenant, whose steed had got the heels of the other, finding it would be great folly and presumption in him to pretend to keep the saddle with his wooden leg, very wisely took the opportunity of throwing himself off in his passage through a field of rich clover, among which he lay at his ease ; and seeing his captain advancing at full gallop, hailed him with the salutation of "What cheer ? ho !" The commodore, who was in infinite distress, eyeing him askance, as he passed, replied with a faltering voice, "O damn ye ! you are safe at an anchor ; I wish to God I were as fast moored." Nevertheless, conscious of his disabled heel, he would not venture to try the same experiment which had succeeded so well with Hatchway, but resolved to stick as close as possible to his horse's back, until providence should interpose in his behalf. With this view he dropped his whip, and with his right hand laid fast hold on the pummel, contracting every muscle in his body to secure himself in the seat, and grinning most formidably, in consequence of this exertion. In this attitude he was hurried on a considerable way, when all of a sudden his

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view was comforted by a five bar gate that appeared before him, as he never doubted that there the career of his hunter must necessarily end. But, alas ! he reckoned without his host ; far from halting at this obstruction, the horse sprung over it with amazing agility, to the utter confusion and disorder of his owner, who lost his hat and periwig in the leap, and now began to think in good earnest that he was actually mounted on the back of the devil. He recommended himself to God, his reflection forsook him, his eye-sight and all his other senses failed, he quitted the reins, and, fastening by instinct on the mane, was in this condition conveyed into the midst of the sportsmen, who were astonished at the sight of such an apparition. Neither was their surprise to be wondered at, if we reflect on the figure that presented itself to their view. The commodore's person was at all times an object of admiration ; much more so on this occasion, when every singularity was aggravated by the circumstances of his dress and disaster.

He had put on, in honour of his nuptials, his best coat of blue broad cloth, cut by a tailor of Ramsgate, and trimmed with five dozen of brass buttons, large and small ; his breeches were of the same piece, fastened at the knees with large bunches of tape ; his waistcoat was of red plush, lapelled with green velvet, and garnished with vellum holes ; his boots bore an intimate resemblance, both in colour and shape, to a pair of leather buckets ; his shoulder was graced with a broad buff belt, from whence depended a huge hanger with a hilt like that of a backsword ; and on each side of his pummel appeared a rusty pistol, rammed in a case covered with a bear-skin. The loss of his tie-periwig and laced hat, which were curiosities of the kind, did not at all contribute to the improvement of the picture, but, on the contrary, by exhibiting his bald pate, and the natural extension of his lanthorn jaws, added to the peculiarity and extravagance of the whole. Such a spectacle could not have failed of diverting the whole company from the chase, had his horse thought proper to pursue a different route, but the beast was too keen a sporter to choose any other way

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than that which the stag followed ; and, therefore, without stopping to gratify the curiosity of the spectators, he, in a few minutes, outstripped every hunter in the field ; and there being a deep hollow way betwixt him and the hounds, rather than ride round about the length of a furlong to a path that crossed the lane, he transported himself at one jump, to the unspeakable astonishment and terror of a waggoner who chanced to be underneath, and saw this phenomenon fly over his carriage. This was not the only adventure he achieved. The stag having taken a deep river that lay in his way, every man directed his course to a bridge in the neighbourhood ; but our bridegroom's courser, despising all such conveniences, plunged into the stream without hesitation, and swam in a twinkling to the opposite shore. This sudden immersion into an element, of which Trunnion was properly a native, in all probability helped to recruit the exhausted spirits of his rider, who, at his landing on the other side, gave some tokens of sensation, by hollowing aloud for assistance, which he could not possibly receive, because his horse still maintained the advantage he had gained, and would not allow himself to be overtaken.

In short, after a long chase that lasted several hours, and extended to a dozen miles at least, he was the first in at the death of the deer, being seconded by the lieutenant's gelding, which, actuated by the same spirit, had, without a rider, followed his companion's example.

Peregrine Pickle.

WILLIAM COWPER

1731-1800

19...A CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

29 March, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It being his majesty's pleasure that I should yet have another opportunity to write before he dissolves the parliament, I avail myself of it with all possible alacrity. I thank you for your last, which was not the less welcome for coming, like an extraordinary gazette, at a time when it was not expected.

As when the sea is uncommonly agitated, the water finds its way into creeks and holes of rocks, which in its calmer state it never reaches, in like manner the effect of these turbulent times is felt even at Orchard-side, where in general we live as undisturbed by the political element, as shrimps or cockles that have been accidentally deposited in some hollow beyond the water mark, by the usual dashing of the waves. We were sitting yesterday after dinner, the two ladies and myself, very composedly, and without the least apprehension of any such intrusion in our snug parlour, one lady knitting, the other netting, and the gentleman winding worsted, when to our unspeakable surprise a mob appeared before the window ; a smart rap was heard at the door, the boys halloo'd, and the maid announced Mr. Grenville. Puss was unfortunately let out of her box, so that the candidate, with all his good friends at his heels, was refused admittance at the grand entry, and referred to the back door, as the only possible way of approach.

Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather, I suppose, climb in at a window, than be absolutely excluded. In a minute, the yard, the kitchen, and the parlour, were filled. Mr. Grenville, advancing

A CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT

towards me, shook me by the hand with a degree of cordiality that was extremely seducing. As soon as he and as many more as could find chairs, were seated, he began to open the intent of his visit. I told him I had no vote, for which he readily gave me credit. I assured him I had no influence, which he was not equally inclined to believe, and the less, no doubt, because Mr. Ashburner, the draper, addressing himself to me at this moment, informed me that I had a great deal. Supposing that I could not be possessed of such a treasure without knowing it, I ventured to confirm my first assertion, by saying, that if I had any I was utterly at a loss to imagine where it could be, or wherein it consisted. Thus ended the conference. Mr. Grenville squeezed me by the hand again, kissed the ladies, and withdrew. He kissed likewise the maid in the kitchen, and seemed upon the whole a most loving, kissing, kind-hearted gentleman. He has a pair of very good eyes in his head, which not being sufficient as it should seem for the many nice and difficult purposes of a senator, he has a third also, which he wore suspended by a riband from his buttonhole. The boys halloo'd, the dogs barked, Puss scampered, the hero, with his long train of obsequious followers, withdrew.

We made ourselves very merry with the adventure, and in a short time settled into our former tranquillity, never probably to be thus interrupted more.

Letter to the Rev. John Newton.

EDWARD GIBBON

1739-1794

20...GIBBON AS A LOVER

I HESITATE, from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. By this word I do not mean the polite attention, the gallantry, without hope or design, which has originated in the spirit of chivalry, and is interwoven with the texture of French manners. I understand by this passion the union of desire, friendship, and tenderness which is inflamed by a single female, which prefers her to the rest of her sex, and which seeks her possession as the supreme or the sole happiness of our being. I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice ; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment. The personal attractions of Mademoiselle Susan Curchod were embellished by the virtues and talents of the mind. Her fortune was humble, but her family was respectable. Her mother, a native of France, had preferred her religion to her country. The profession of her father did not extinguish the moderation and philosophy of his temper, and he lived content with a small salary and laborious duty in the obscure lot of minister of Crassy, in the mountains that separate the Pays de Vaud from the county of Burgundy. In the solitude of a sequestered village he bestowed a liberal, and even learned, education on his only daughter. She surpassed his hopes by her proficiency in the sciences and languages ; and in her short visits to some relations at Lausanne, the wit, the beauty, and erudition of Mademoiselle Curchod were the theme of universal applause. The report of such a prodigy awakened my curiosity ; I saw and loved. I found her learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in

GIBBON AS A LOVER

sentiment, and elegant in manners ; and the first sudden emotion was fortified by the habits and knowledge of a more familiar acquaintance. She permitted me to make her two or three visits at her father's house. I passed some happy days there, in the mountains of Burgundy, and her parents honourably encouraged the connexion. In a calm retirement the gay vanity of youth no longer fluttered in her bosom ; she listened to the voice of truth and passion, and I might presume to hope that I had made some impression on a virtuous heart. At Crassy and Lausanne I indulged my dream of felicity : but on my return to England, I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate : I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son ; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem. The minister of Crassy soon afterwards died ; his stipend died with him ; his daughter retired to Geneva, where by teaching young ladies, she earned a hard subsistence for herself and her mother ; but in her lowest distress she maintained a spotless reputation, and a dignified behaviour. A rich banker of Paris, a citizen of Geneva, had the good fortune and good sense to discover and possess this inestimable treasure ; and in the capital of taste and luxury she resisted the temptations of wealth, as she had sustained the hardships of indigence. The genius of her husband has exalted him to the most conspicuous station in Europe. In every change of prosperity and disgrace he has reclined on the bosom of a faithful friend ; and Mademoiselle Curchod is now the wife of M. Necker, the minister, and perhaps the legislator, of the French monarchy.

Autobiography.

JAMES BOSWELL

1740-1795

21...BOSWELL'S FIRST MEETING WITH JOHNSON

MR. THOMAS DAVIES the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him : but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion ; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for years, maintained an uniform decency of character ; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop ; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio,

BOSWELL'S FIRST MEETING WITH JOHNSON

when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation ; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated ; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson (said I), I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky ; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country ; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal ; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies : "What do you think of Garrick ? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done : and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check ; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his

BOSWELL'S FIRST MEETING WITH JOHNSON
animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think, that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited. . . .

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly ; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, " Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

Life of Johnson.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

1728-1774

22...MOSES AT THE FAIR

WHEN we were returned home, the night was dedicated to schemes of future conquest. Deborah exerted much sagacity in conjecturing which of the two girls was likely to have the best place, and most opportunities of seeing good company. The only obstacle to our preferment was in obtaining the Squire's recommendation; but he had already shown us too many instances of his friendship to doubt of it now. Even in bed, my wife kept up the usual theme: "Well, faith, my dear Charles, between ourselves, I think we have made an excellent day's work of it."—"Pretty well!" cried I, not knowing what to say. "What, only pretty well!" returned she: "I think it is very well. Suppose the girls should come to make acquaintances of taste in town! This I am assured of, that London is the only place in the world for all manner of husbands. Besides, my dear, stranger things happen every day: and as ladies of quality are so taken with my daughters, what will not men of quality be? *Entre nous*, I protest I like my Lady Blarney vastly—so very obliging. However, Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs has my warm heart. But yet, when they came to talk of places in town, you saw at once how I nailed them. Tell me, my dear, don't you think I did for my children there?"—"Ay," returned I, not knowing well what to think of the matter; "Heaven grant they may be both the better for it this day three months!" This was one of those observations I usually made to impress my wife with an opinion of my sagacity: for if the girls succeeded, then it was a pious wish fulfilled; but if anything unfortunate ensued, then it might be looked upon as a prophecy. All this conversa-

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tion, however, was only preparatory to another scheme ; and indeed I dreaded as much. This was nothing less than that, as we were now to hold up our heads a little higher in the world, it would be proper to sell the Colt, which was grown old, at a neighbouring fair, and buy us a horse that would carry single or double upon an occasion, and make a pretty appearance at church, or upon a visit. This at first I opposed stoutly ; but it was as stoutly defended. However, as I weakened, my antagonists gained strength, till at last it was resolved to part with him.

As the fair happened on the following day, I had intentions of going myself ; but my wife persuaded me that I had got a cold, and nothing could prevail upon her to permit me from home. “ No, my dear,” said she, “ our son Moses is a discreet boy, and can buy and sell to very good advantage : you know all our great bargains are of his purchasing. He always stands out and higgles, and actually tires them till he gets a bargain.”

As I had some opinion of my son’s prudence, I was willing enough to entrust him with this commission : and the next morning I perceived his sisters mighty busy in fitting out Moses for the fair ; trimming his hair, brushing his buckles, and cocking his hat with pins. The business of the toilet being over, we had at last the satisfaction of seeing him mounted upon the Colt, with a deal box before him to bring home groceries in. He had on a coat made of that cloth called thunder-and-lightning, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black ribbon. We all followed him several paces from the door, bawling after him, “ Good luck ! good luck ! ” till we could see him no longer.

He was scarcely gone, when Mr. Thornhill’s butler came to congratulate us upon our good fortune, saying that he overheard his young master mention our names with great commendation.

Good fortune seemed resolved not to come alone. Another footman from the same family followed, with a card for my

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daughters, importing that the two ladies had received such pleasing accounts from Mr. Thornhill of us all, that after a few previous inquiries they hoped to be perfectly satisfied. "Ay," cried my wife, "I now see it is no easy matter to get into the families of the great; but when one once gets in, then, as Moses says, one may go to sleep." To this piece of humour, for she intended it for wit, my daughters assented with a loud laugh of pleasure. In short, such was her satisfaction at this message, that she actually put her hand in her pocket, and gave the messenger sevenpence halfpenny.

This was to be our visiting day. The next that came was Mr. Burchell, who had been at the fair. He brought my little ones a pennyworth of gingerbread each, which my wife undertook to keep for them, and give them by letters at a time. He brought my daughters also a couple of boxes, in which they might keep wafers, snuff, patches, or even money, when they got it. My wife was usually fond of a weasel-skin purse, as being the most lucky; but this by the by. We had still a regard for Mr. Burchell, though his late rude behaviour was in some measure displeasing; nor could we now avoid communicating our happiness to him, and asking his advice: although we seldom followed advice, we were all ready enough to ask it. When he read the note from the two ladies, he shook his head, and observed, that an affair of this sort demanded the utmost circumspection. This air of diffidence highly displeased my wife. "I never doubted, Sir," cried she, "your readiness to be against my daughters and me. You have more circumspection than is wanted. However, I fancy when we come to ask advice, we will apply to persons who seem to have made use of it themselves."—"Whatever my own conduct may have been, Madam," replied he, "is not the present question: though, as I have made no use of advice myself, I should in conscience give it to those that will." As I was apprehensive this answer might draw on a repartee, making up by abuse what it wanted in wit, I changed the subject, by seeming to wonder what could keep our son so

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long at the fair, as it was now almost nightfall. "Never mind our son," cried my wife; "depend upon it he knows what he is about. I'll warrant we'll never see him sell his hen of a rainy day. I have seen him buy such bargains as would amaze one. I'll tell you a good story about that, that will make you split your sides with laughing.—But, as I live, yonder comes Moses, without a horse, and the box at his back."

As she spoke, Moses came slowly on foot, and sweating under the deal box, which he had strapt round his shoulders like a pedlar. "Welcome, welcome, Moses! Well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?"—"I have brought you myself," cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser. "Ay, Moses," cried my wife, "that we know; but where is the horse?"—"I have sold him," cried Moses, "for three pounds five shillings and twopence."—"Well done, my good boy," returned she; "I knew you would touch them off. Between ourselves, three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then."—"I have brought back no money," cried Moses again. "I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is," pulling out a bundle from his breast: "here they are; a gross of green spectacles, with silver rims and shagreen cases."—"A gross of green spectacles!" repeated my wife, in a faint voice. "And you have parted with the Colt, and brought us back nothing but a gross of green paltry spectacles!"—"Dear mother," cried the boy, "why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have bought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money."—"A fig for the silver rims," cried my wife, in a passion: "I dare swear they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver, five shillings an ounce."—"You need be under no uneasiness," cried I, "about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence; for I perceive they are only copper varnished over."—"What!" cried my wife, "not silver! the rims not silver?"—"No," cried I, "no more silver than your sauce-pan."—"And so," returned she, "we

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have parted with the Colt, and have only got a gross of green spectacles, with copper rims and shagreen cases ? A murrain take such trumpery ! The blockhead has been imposed upon, and should have known his company better.”—“There, my dear,” cried I, “you are wrong ; he should not have known them at all.”—“Marry, hang the idiot !” returned she, “to bring me such stuff : if I had them I would throw them in the fire.”—“There again you are wrong, my dear,” cried I ; “for though they be copper, we will keep them by us, as copper spectacles, you know, are better than nothing.”

By this time the unfortunate Moses was undeceived. He now saw that he had indeed been imposed upon by a prowling sharper, who, observing his figure, had marked him for an easy prey. I therefore asked the circumstances of his deception. He sold the horse, it seems, and walked the fair in search of another. A reverend-looking man brought him to a tent, under pretence of having one to sell. “Here,” continued Moses, “we met another man, very well dressed, who desired to borrow twenty pounds upon these, saying that he wanted money, and would dispose of them for a third of the value. The first gentleman, who pretended to be my friend, whispered me to buy them, and cautioned me not to let so good an offer pass. I sent for Mr. Flamborough, and they talked him up as finely as they did me ; and so at last we were persuaded to buy the two gross between us.”

The Vicar of Wakefield.

23...THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

[Mr. Hardcastle, who wishes young Marlow, the son of his old friend Sir Charles Marlow, to marry his daughter Kate, has invited him on a visit to his house with a view to arranging the marriage. Young Marlow, who has never previously met either Hardcastle or his daughter, sets out with his friend Hastings in response to the invitation, and arrives at the *Three Jolly Pigeons*, an alchouse in the immediate vicinity. He inquires of the landlord the way to Mr. Hardcastle's house, when Tony Lumpkin, the loutish stepson of Mr. Hardcastle, who happens to be on the spot, asks, without disclosing who he is, if this Mr. Hardcastle is not a cross-grained, old-fashioned fellow with a tall, trapesing, trolloping daughter, and a pretty, well-bred son. They reply that their information is different: that the daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful and the son an awkward booby reared up at his mother's apron-string. In revenge for this and to provoke his step-father, who, he says, is always grumbling at him, Tony, in connivance with the landlord, tells them that they are miles out of their way and will never reach their destination that night, at the same time sending them for accommodation to Mr. Hardcastle's house by making them believe that it is an inn.]

Scene : An old-fashioned House

Enter Hardcastle, followed by three or four awkward Servants.

Hardcastle : Well, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company, without ever stirring from home.

Omnes : Ay, ay.

Hardcastle : When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frightened rabbits in a warren.

Omnes : No, no.

Hardcastle : You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the

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barn, are to make a show at the side-table ; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind *my* chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger ; and from your head, you blockhead, you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Diggory : Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way, when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill——

Hardcastle : You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking ; you must see us drink and not think of drinking ; you must see us eat and not think of eating.

Diggory : By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself.

Hardcastle : Blockhead ! Is not a bellyful in the kitchen as good as a bellyful in the parlour ? Stay your stomach with that reflection.

Diggory : Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry.

Hardcastle : Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company.

Diggory : Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room : I can't help laughing at that—he ! he ! he !—for the soul of me ! We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha ! ha ! ha !

Hardcastle : Ha ! ha ! ha ! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave ? A glass of wine, sir, if you please (*to Diggory*). Eh, why don't you move ?

Diggory : Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

Hardcastle : What, will nobody move ?

First Servant : I'm not to leave this place.

Second Servant : I'm sure it's no place of mine.

Third Servant : Nor mine for sartain.

Diggory : Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

Hardcastle : You numskulls ! and so while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved. O, you dunces ! I find I must begin all over again. But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard ? To your posts, you blockheads ! I'll go in the meantime and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate.

[Exit *Hardcastle*.

Diggory : By the elevens, my place is gone quite out of my head !

Roger : I know that my place is to be everywhere !

First Servant : Where the devil is mine ?

Second Servant : My place is to be nowhere at all ; and so Ize go about my business ! [Exeunt *Servants*, running about as if frightened, different ways.

Enter Servants with Candles, showing in Marlow and Hastings.

Servant : Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome. This way.

Hastings : After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well-looking house ; antique but creditable.

Marlow : The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

Hastings : As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly.

Marlow : Travellers, George, must pay in all places.

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The only difference is, that in good inns, you pay dearly for luxuries ; in bad inns, you are fleeced and starved.

Hastings : You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised, that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

Marlow : The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of ? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—except my mother—but among females of another class, you know—

Hastings : Ay, among them you are impudent enough of all conscience !

Marlow : They are of *us*, you know.

Hastings : But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler ; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

Marlow : Why, man, that's because I *do* want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate. But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally over-set my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence.

Hastings : If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the barmaid of an inn, or even a college bedmaker—

Marlow : Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle. But to me, a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

Hastings : Ha ! ha ! ha ! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry !

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Marlow : Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of, *madam, will you marry me?* No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you!

Hastings : I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Marlow : As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low. Answer yes, or no, to all her demands.—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face, till I see my father's again.

Hastings : I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Marlow : To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you, the family don't know you, as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest.

Hastings : My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent and her own inclination.

Marlow : Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward unprepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's apprentice, or one of the duchesses of Drury Lane. Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

Enter Hardcastle.

Hardcastle : Gentlemen, once more you are heartily

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welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Marlow (aside) : He has got our names from the servants already. (*To him*) We approve your caution and hospitality, sir. (*To Hastings*) I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning. I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

Hardcastle : I beg, Mr. Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

Hastings : I fancy, George, you're right : the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

Hardcastle : Mr. Marlow—Mr. Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no constraint in this house. This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

Marlow : Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hardcastle : Your talking of a retreat, Mr. Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison——

Marlow : Don't you think the *ventre d'or* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hardcastle : He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

Hastings : I think not : brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

Hardcastle : I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

Marlow : The girls like finery.

Hardcastle : Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. "Now," says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you

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must have heard of George Brooks ; “ I’ll pawn my Dukedom,” says he, “ but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood ! ” So——

Marlow : What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime, it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

Hardcastle : Punch, sir ! (*Aside*) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with !

Marlow : Yes, sir, punch ! A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty Hall, you know.

Hardcastle : Here’s cup, sir.

Marlow (aside) : So this fellow, in his Liberty Hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

Hardcastle (taking the cup) : I hope you’ll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you’ll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir ? Here, Mr. Marlow, here is our better acquaintance ! [*Drinks.*]

Marlow (aside) : A very impudent fellow this ! but he’s a character, and I’ll humour him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*]

Hastings (aside) : I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he’s an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman.

Marlow : From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country. Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose ?

Hardcastle : No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there’s no business *for us that sell ale*.

Hastings : So, then you have no turn for politics, I find.

Hardcastle : Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people ; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about *Heyder Ally*,

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

Ally Cawn, than about *Ally Croker*. Sir, my service to you.

Hastings : So that, with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good pleasant bustling life of it.

Hardcastle : I do stir about a great deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlour.

Marlow (after drinking) : And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster Hall.

Hardcastle : Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

Marlow (aside) : Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

Hastings : So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy ; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher. [Drinks.]

Hardcastle : Good, very good, thank you ; ha ! ha ! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear.

Marlow : Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper ?

Hardcastle : For supper, sir !—(Aside) Was ever such a request to a man in his own house !

Marlow : Yes, sir, supper, sir ; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

Hardcastle (aside) : Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld. (To him) Why, really, sir, as for supper I can't well tell. My Dorothy, and the cook maid, settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

Marlow : You do, do you ?

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

Hardcastle : Entirely. By-the-bye, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

Marlow : Then I'll beg they'll admit *me* as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always choose to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir.

Hardcastle : O, no, sir, none in the least ; yet, I don't know how : our Bridget, the cook maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

Hastings : Let's see your list of the larder, then. I ask it as a favour. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

Marlow (to Hardcastle, who looks at them with surprise) : Sir, he's very right, and it's my way, too.

Hardcastle : Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr. Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

Hastings (aside) : All upon the high ropes ! His uncle a colonel ! We shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

Marlow (perusing) : What's here ? For the first course ; for the second course ; for the dessert. The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down the whole Joiners' Company, or the Corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper ? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

Hastings : But let's hear it.

Marlow (reading) : For the first course at the top, a pig, and prune sauce.

Hastings : Damn your pig, I say !

Marlow : And damn your prune sauce, say I !

Hardcastle : And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with prune sauce, is very good eating.

Marlow : At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains.

Hastings : Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir ; I don't like them.

THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT

Marlow : Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves, I do.

Hardcastle (aside) : Their impudence confounds me. (*To them*) Gentlemen, you are my guests, make what alterations you please. Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen ?

Marlow : Item. A pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff-taff-taffety cream !

Hastings : Confound your made dishes, I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at a French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

Hardcastle : I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to——

Marlow : Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

Hardcastle : I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

Marlow : Leave that to you ! I protest, sir, you must excuse me, I always look to these things myself.

Hardcastle : I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

Marlow : You see I'm resolved on it.—(*Aside*) A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with.

Hardcastle : Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you. (*Aside*) This may be modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exeunt Marlow and Hardcastle.*
She Stoops to Conquer.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

1751-1816

24...MRS. MALAPROP

A Dressing-room in Mrs. Malaprop's Lodgings

Lydia Languish. *To her enter Mrs. Malaprop and Sir Anthony Absolute.*

Mrs. Malaprop : There, Sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

Lydia : Madam, I thought you once——

Mrs. Malaprop : You thought, miss ! I don't know any business you have to think at all—thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow—to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

Lydia : Ah, madam ! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not so easy to forget.

Mrs. Malaprop : But I say it is, miss ; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do ; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

Sir Anthony : Why sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not !—ay, this comes of her reading !

Lydia : What crime, madam, have I committed, to be treated thus ?

Mrs. Malaprop : Now don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter ; you know I have proof controvertible of it. But tell me, will you promise to do as you're bid ? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing ?

Lydia : Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no

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preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

Mrs. Malaprop : What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion ? They don't become a young woman ; and you ought to know, that as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I am sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a blackamoor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made !—and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown what tears I shed ! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley ?

Lydia : Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

Mrs. Malaprop : Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill-humours.

Lydia : Willingly, ma'am—I cannot change for the worse.
[Exit.]

Mrs. Malaprop : There's a little intricate hussy for you !

Sir Anthony : It is not to be wondered at, ma'am,—all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven ! I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet !

Mrs. Malaprop : Nay, nay, Sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

Sir Anthony : In my way hither, Mrs. Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library. She had a book in each hand—they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers. From that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress !

Mrs. Malaprop : Those are vile places, indeed !

Sir Anthony : Madam, a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge. It blossoms through the year !—and depend on it, Mrs. Malaprop, that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

Mrs. Malaprop : Fy, fy, Sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

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Sir Anthony : Why, Mrs. Malaprop, in moderation now, what would you have a woman know ?

Mrs. Malaprop : Observe me, Sir Anthony. I wou'd by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning ; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman ; for instance, I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning—neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments.—But, Sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts ;—and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries ;—but above all, Sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not misspell, and mis-pronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do ; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, Sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know ;—and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

The Rivals.

25...BOB ACRES PREPARES TO FIGHT A DUEL

King's-Mead-Fields

Enter Sir Lucius O'Trigger and Acres, with pistols.

Acres : By my valour ! then, Sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance. Odds levels and aims !—I say it is a good distance.

Sir Lucius : Is it for muskets or small field-pieces ? Upon my conscience, Mr. Acres, you must leave those things to me. Stay now—I'll show you. (*Measures paces along the stage.*) There now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

Acres : Zounds ! we might as well fight in a sentry-box ! I tell you, Sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

Sir Lucius : Faith ! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all if he was out of sight !

Acres : No, Sir Lucius ; but I should think forty or eight and thirty yards——

Sir Lucius : Pho ! pho ! nonsense ! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile.

Acres : Odds bullets, no !—by my valour ! there is no merit in killing him so near ; do, my dear Sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, Sir Lucius, if you love me.

Sir Lucius : Well, the gentleman's friend and I must settle that. But tell me now, Mr. Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you ?

Acres : I am much obliged to you, Sir Lucius, but I don't understand——

Sir Lucius : Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk—and if an unlucky bullet should

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carry a quietus with it—I say it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

Acres : A quietus !

Sir Lucius : For instance, now—if that should be the case—would you choose to be pickled and sent home?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey ? I'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Acres : Pickled !—Snug lying in the Abbey !—Odds tremors ! Sir Lucius, don't talk so !

Sir Lucius : I suppose, Mr. Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before ?

Acres : No, Sir Lucius, never before.

Sir Lucius : Ah ! that's a pity !—there's nothing like being used to a thing. Pray now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot ?

Acres : Odds files !—I've practised that—there, Sir Lucius—there. (*Puts himself in an attitude.*) A side-front, hey ? Odd ! I'll make myself small enough ? I'll stand edgeways.

Sir Lucius : Now—you're quite out—for if you stand so when I take my aim—— [*Levelling at him.*]

Acres : Zounds ! Sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked ?

Sir Lucius : Never fear.

Acres : But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head !

Sir Lucius : Pho ! be easy.—Well, now if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left !

Acres : A vital part !

Sir Lucius : But, there—fix yourself so—(*placing him*)—let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all.

Acres : Clean through me !—a ball or two clean through me !

Sir Lucius : Ay—may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

BOB ACRES PREPARES TO FIGHT A DUEL

Acres : Look'ee ! Sir Lucius—I'd just as lieve be shot in an awkward posture as a genteel one ; so, by my valour ! I will stand edgeways.

Sir Lucius (looking at his watch) : Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah !—no, faith—I think I see them coming.

Acres : Hey !—what !—coming !

Sir Lucius : Ay !—Who are those yonder getting over the stile ?

Acres : There are two of them indeed !—well—let them come—hey, Sir Lucius !—we—we—we—we—won't run.

Sir Lucius : Run !

Acres : No—I say—we won't run, by my valour !

Sir Lucius : What the devil's the matter with you ?

Acres : Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear Sir Lucius—but I—I—I don't feel quite so bold, somehow, as I did.

Sir Lucius : O fy !—consider your honour.

Acres : Ay—true—my honour. Do, Sir Lucius, edge in a word or two every now and then about my honour.

Sir Lucius : Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*]

Acres : Sir Lucius—if I wa'n't with you, I should almost think I was afraid.—If my valour should leave me ! Valour will come and go.

Sir Lucius : Then pray keep it fast, while you have it.

Acres : Sir Lucius—I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going !—it is sneaking off !—I feel it oozing out as it were at the palms of my hands !

Sir Lucius : Your honour—your honour. Here they are.

Acres : O mercy !—now—that I was safe at Clod Hall ! or could be shot before I was aware !

The Rivals.

26...THE SCHOOL AT WORK

A Room in Lady Sneerwell's House

Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and Joseph Surface, *discovered*.

Lady Sneerwell : Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Joseph Surface : Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Benjamin : O plague on't, uncle ! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crabtree : No, no ; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore !

Sir Benjamin : But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricke was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies ; upon which, I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following :—

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies ;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies :
To give them this title I am sure can't be wrong.
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crabtree : There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback, too.

Joseph Surface : A very Phœbus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin !

Sir Benjamin : Oh, dear, sir !—trifles—trifles.

Enter Lady Teazle and Maria.

Mrs. Candour : I must have a copy.

Lady Sneerwell : Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter ?

Lady Teazle : I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

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Lady Sneerwell : Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

Maria : I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

Lady Teazle : I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her ; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came. [Aside.

Mrs. Candour : Now, I'll die ; but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

Lady Teazle : What's the matter, Mrs. Candour ?

Mrs. Candour : They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermillion to be handsome.

Lady Sneerwell : Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

Crabtree : I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Candour : She has a charming fresh colour.

Lady Teazle : Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Candour : Oh, fie ! I'll swear her colour is natural : I have seen it come and go !

Lady Teazle : I dare swear you have, ma'am : it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

Sir Benjamin : True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes ; but, what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it !

Mrs. Candour : Ha ! ha ! ha ! how I hate to hear you talk so ! But surely, now, her sister is, or was, very handsome.

Crabtree : Who ? Mrs. Evergreen ? O Lord ! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour !

Mrs. Candour : Now positively you wrong her ; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Benjamin : Ah ! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneerwell : Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen does take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity ; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

Sir Benjamin : Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill—but, when she has finished her face, she joins it on so

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badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur may see at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique !

Crabtree : Ha ! ha ! ha ! Well said, nephew !

Mrs. Candour : Ha ! ha ! ha ! Well, you make me laugh ; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper ?

Sir Benjamin : Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teazle : Yes ; and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on ajar, as it were—thus. [Shows her teeth.

Mrs. Candour : How can you be so ill-natured ?

Lady Teazle : Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's-box, and all her words appear to slide out edge-wise, as it were—thus : *How do you do, madam ? Yes, madam.*

Lady Sneerwell : Very well, Lady Teazle ; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teazle : In defence of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantries.

Enter Sir Peter Teazle.

Sir Peter : Ladies, your most obedient. (*Aside*) Mercy on me, here is the whole set ! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Candour : I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

Sir Peter : That must be very distressing to you, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

Mrs. Candour : Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody ; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

Lady Teazle : What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night ?

Mrs. Candour : Nay, her bulk is her misfortune ; and,

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when she takes so much pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneerwell : That's very true, indeed.

Lady Teazle : Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey ; laces herself by pulleys ; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round the Ring on a full trot.

Mrs. Candour : I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Peter : Yes, a good defence, truly.

Mrs. Candour : Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crabtree : Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Candour : Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made ; for, let me tell you, a woman labours under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl of six-and-thirty.

Lady Sneerwell : Though, surely, she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Candour : True ; and then as to her manner, upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education ; for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Benjamin : Ah ! you are both of you too good-natured !

Sir Peter : Yes, damned good-natured ! This their own relation ! mercy on me !

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Candour : For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill-spoken of.

Sir Peter : No, to be sure !

Sir Benjamin : Oh ! you are of a moral turn. Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady Teazle : Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with

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the dessert after dinner ; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Candour : Well, I will never join in ridiculing a friend ; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crabtree : Oh, to be sure ! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen ; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Benjamin : So she has, indeed—an Irish front——

Crabtree : Caledonian locks——

Sir Benjamin : Dutch nose——

Crabtree : Austrian lips——

Sir Benjamin : Complexion of a Spaniard——

Crabtree : And teeth *à la Chinoise*——

Sir Benjamin : In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation——

Crabtree : Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Candour : Ha ! ha ! ha !

Sir Peter : Mercy on my life !—a person they dine with twice a week !

[*Aside.*

Lady Sneerwell : Go—go—you are a couple of provoking Toads.

Mrs. Candour : Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle——

Sir Peter : Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sneerwell : Ha ! ha ! ha ! well said, Sir Peter ! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Peter : Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady Teazle : True, Sir Peter : I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

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Sir Benjamin : Or rather, madam, suppose them man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

Lady Teazle : But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Peter : 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, I believe many would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneerwell : O Lud ! Sir Peter ; would you deprive us of our privileges ?

Sir Peter : Ay, madam ; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneerwell : Go, you monster !

Mrs. Candour : But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear ?

Sir Peter : Yes, madam, I would have law merchant for them too ; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crabtree : Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Lady Sneerwell : Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room ?

The School for Scandal.

27...SELLING THE FAMILY PICTURES

A Picture Room in Charles Surface's House

Enter Charles Surface, Sir Oliver Surface, Moses, and Careless.

Charles Surface : Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in ;—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliver : And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles Surface : Ay, ay, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting ; no *volontière grace* or expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you ; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no ; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliver : Ah ! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles Surface : I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am ; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer ; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

Careless : Ay, ay, this will do. . But, Charles, I haven't a hammer ; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer ?

Charles Surface : Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here ? Oh, our genealogy in full. (*Taking pedigree down.*) Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree for you, you rogue ! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliver : What an unnatural rogue !—an *ex post facto* parricide !

[*Aside.*

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Careless : Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed ; faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going !

Charles Surface : Bravo, *Careless* ! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Ravelin, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium ? look at him—there's a hero ! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid ?

Sir Oliver (aside to Moses) : Bid him speak.

Moses : Mr. Premium would have you speak.

Charles Surface : Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliver (aside) : Heaven deliver me ! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds ! (*Aloud*) Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Charles Surface : *Careless*, knock down my uncle Richard. Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done by Kneller, in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliver (aside) : Ah ! poor Deborah ! a woman who set such a value on herself ! (*Aloud*) Five pounds ten—she's mine.

Charles Surface : Knock down my aunt Deborah ! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliver : Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Charles Surface : Well, take that couple for the same.

Moses : 'Tis a good bargain.

Charles Surface : *Careless* !—This, now, is a grandfather

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of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses ?

Moses : Four guineas.

Charles Surface : Four guineas ! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack ; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver : By all means.

Careless : Gone !

Charles Surface : And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers ; and, what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliver : That is very extraordinary, indeed ! I'll take them at your own price, for the honour of Parliament.

Careless : Well said, little Premium ! I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles Surface : Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Norwich : take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver : No, no ; six will do for the mayor.

Charles Surface : Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver : They're mine.

Charles Surface : Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't ! we shall be all day retailing in this manner ; do let us deal wholesale ; what say you, little Premium ? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless : Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver : Well, well, anything to accommodate you ; they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless : What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee ?

Sir Oliver : Yes, sir, I mean that ; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Charles Surface : What, that ? Oh, that's my uncle Oliver ! 'Twas done before he went to India.

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Careless : Your uncle Oliver ! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw ; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance ! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium ?

Sir Oliver : Upon my soul, sir, I do not ; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber ?

Charles Surface : No, hang it ! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliver (aside) : The rogue's my nephew after all !
(*Aloud*) But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles Surface : I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them ?

Sir Oliver (aside) : I forgive him everything ! (*Aloud*) But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles Surface : Don't tease me, master broker ; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliver (aside) : How like his father the dog is.
(*Aloud*) Well, well, I have done. (*Aside*) I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance. (*Aloud*) Here is a draught for your sum.

Charles Surface : Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds !

Sir Oliver : You will not let Sir Oliver go ?

Charles Surface : Zounds ! no ! I tell you, once more.

Sir Oliver : Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain ; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

Charles Surface : Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow !—But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

Sir Oliver : Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles Surface : But hold ; do now send a genteel

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conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliver : I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

Charles Surface : Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliver : You're fixed on that ?

Charles Surface : Peremptorily.

Sir Oliver (aside) : A dear extravagant rogue ! (*Aloud*) Good day !—Come, Moses. (*Aside*) Let me hear now who dares call him profligate ! [Exit with Moses.

Careless : Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever met with !

Charles Surface : Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—Ha ! here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

Careless : I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense ; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Charles Surface : Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Careless : Nothing else.

Charles Surface : Ay, ay, never fear. (*Exit Careless.*) So ! this was an odd old fellow, indeed. Let me see, two-thirds of these five hundred and thirty odd pounds are mine by right. 'Fore Heaven ! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for !—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

[Bows ceremoniously to the pictures.
The School for Scandal.

28...SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY

A Room in Dangle's House

Mr. and Mrs. Dangle and Sneer.

Enter Servant.

Servant : Sir Fretful Plagiary, sir.

Dangle : Beg him to walk up. (*Exit Servant.*) Now, Mrs. Dangle, Sir Fretful Plagiary is an author to your own taste.

Mrs. Dangle : I confess he is a favourite of mine, because everybody else abuses him.

Sneer : Very much to the credit of your charity, madam, if not of your judgment.

Dangle : But, egad, he allows no merit to any author but himself, that's the truth on't—though he's my friend.

Sneer : Never.—He is as envious as an old maid verging on the desperation of six and thirty ; and then the insidious humility with which he seduces you to give a free opinion on any of his works, can be exceeded only by the petulant arrogance with which he is sure to reject your observations.

Dangle : Very true, egad—though he's my friend.

Sneer : Then his affected contempt of all newspaper strictures ; though, at the same time, he is the sorest man alive, and shrinks like scorched parchment from the fiery ordeal of true criticism : yet he is so covetous of popularity, that he had rather be abused than not mentioned at all.

Dangle : There's no denying it—though he is my friend.

Sneer : You have read the tragedy he has just finished, haven't you ?

Dangle : Oh, yes ; he sent it to me yesterday.

Sneer : Well, and you think it execrable, don't you ?

Dangle : Why, between ourselves, egad, I must own—though he is my friend—that it is one of the most—He's here (*aside*)—finished and most admirable perform—

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Sir Fretful (without) : Mr. Sneer with him did you say ?

Enter Sir Fretful Plagiary.

Dangle : Ah, my dear friend !—Egad, we were just speaking of your tragedy.—Admirable, Sir Fretful, admirable !

Sneer : You never did anything beyond it, Sir Fretful—never in your life.

Sir Fretful : You make me extremely happy ; for without a compliment, my dear Sneer, there isn't a man in the world whose judgment I value as I do yours and Mr. Dangle's.

Mrs. Dangle : They are only laughing at you, Sir Fretful ; for it was but just now that——

Dangle : Mrs. Dangle !—Ah, Sir Fretful, you know Mrs. Dangle.—My friend Sneer was rallying just now :—he knows how she admires you, and——

Sir Fretful : O Lord, I am sure Mr. Sneer has more taste and sincerity than to—— (*Aside*) A damned double-faced fellow !

Dangle : Yes, yes—Sneer will jest—but a better humoured——

Sir Fretful : Oh, I know——

Dangle : He has a ready turn for ridicule—his wit costs him nothing.

Sir Fretful : No, egad—or I should wonder how he came by it. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Dangle : Because his jest is always at the expense of his friend. [*Aside.*]

Dangle : But, Sir Fretful, have you sent your play to the managers yet ?—or can I be of any service to you ?

Sir Fretful : No, no, I thank you : I believe the piece had sufficient recommendation with it.—I thank you though.—I sent it to the manager of Covent Garden Theatre this morning.

Sneer : I should have thought now, that it might have been cast (as the actors call it) better at Drury Lane.

Sir Fretful : O Lud ! no—never send a play there while I live—hark 'ee ! [*Whispers Sneer.*]

Sneer : Writes himself !—I know he does.

SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY

Sir Fretful : I say nothing—I take away from no man's merit—am hurt at no man's good fortune—I say nothing.—But this I will say—through all my knowledge of life, I have observed—that there is not a passion so strongly rooted in the human heart as envy.

Sneer : I believe you have reason for what you say, indeed.

Sir Fretful : Besides—I can tell you it is not always so safe to leave a play in the hands of those who write themselves.

Sneer : What, they may steal from them, hey, my dear Plagiary ?

Sir Fretful : Steal !—to be sure they may ; and, egad, serve your best thoughts as gypsies do stolen children, disfigure them to make 'em pass for their own.

Sneer : But your present work is a sacrifice to Melpomene, and he, you know, never——

Sir Fretful : That's no security : a dexterous plagiarist may do anything. Why, sir, for aught I know, he might take out some of the best things in my tragedy, and put them into his own comedy.

Sneer : That might be done, I dare be sworn.

Sir Fretful : And then, if such a person gives you the least hint or assistance, he is devilish apt to take the merit of the whole——

Dangle : If it succeeds.

Sir Fretful : Ay, but with regard to this piece, I think I can hit that gentleman, for I can safely swear he never read it.

Sneer : I'll tell you how you may hurt him more.

Sir Fretful : How ?

Sneer : Swear he wrote it.

Sir Fretful : Plague on't now, Sneer, I shall take it ill !—I believe you want to take away my character as an author.

Sneer : Then I am sure you ought to be very much obliged to me.

Sir Fretful : Hey !—sir !——

Dangle : Oh, you know, he never means what he says.

Sir Fretful : Sincerely then—do you like the piece ?

Sneer : Wonderfully !

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Sir Fretful : But come, now, there must be something that you think might be mended, hey?—Mr. Dangle, has nothing struck you?

Dangle : Why, faith, it is but an ungracious thing for the most part, to——

Sir Fretful : With most authors it is just so, indeed ; they are in general strangely tenacious ! But, for my part, I am never so well pleased as when a judicious critic points out any defect to me ; for what is the purpose of showing a work to a friend, if you don't mean to profit by his opinion ?

Sneer : Very true. Why, then, though I seriously admire the piece upon the whole, yet there is one small objection ; which, if you'll give me leave, I'll mention.

Sir Fretful : Sir, you can't oblige me more.

Sneer : I think it wants incident.

Sir Fretful : Good God ! you surprise me !—wants incident !

Sneer : Yes ; I own I think the incidents are too few.

Sir Fretful : Good God ! Believe me, Mr. Sneer, there is no person for whose judgment I have a more implicit deference. But I protest to you, Mr. Sneer, I am only apprehensive that the incidents are too crowded.—My dear Dangle, how does it strike you ?

Dangle : Really I can't agree with my friend Sneer. I think the plot quite sufficient ; and the four first acts by many degrees the best I ever read or saw in my life. If I might venture to suggest anything, it is that the interest rather falls off in the fifth.

Sir Fretful : Rises, I believe you mean, sir.

Dangle : No, I don't, upon my word.

Sir Fretful : Yes, yes, you do, upon my soul !—it certainly don't fall off, I assure you.—No, no ; it don't fall off.

Dangle : Now, Mrs. Dangle, didn't you say it struck you in the same light ?

Mrs. Dangle : No, indeed, I did not.—I did not see a fault in any part of the play, from the beginning to the end.

Sir Fretful : Upon my soul, the women are the best judges after all !

SIR FRETFUL PLAGIARY

Mrs. Dangle : Or, if I made any objection, I am sure it was to nothing in the piece ; but that I was afraid it was on the whole, a little too long.

Sir Fretful : Pray, madam, do you speak as to duration of time ; or do you mean that the story is tediously spun out ?

Mrs. Dangle : O Lud ! no. I speak only with reference to the usual length of acting plays.

Sir Fretful : Then I am very happy—very happy indeed—because the play is a short play, a remarkably short play. I should not venture to differ with a lady on a point of taste ; but on these occasions, the watch, you know, is the critic.

Mrs. Dangle : Then, I suppose, it must have been Mr. Dangle's drawling manner of reading it to me.

Sir Fretful : Oh, if Mr. Dangle read it, that's quite another affair !—But I assure you, Mrs. Dangle, the first evening you can spare me three hours and a half, I'll undertake to read you the whole, from beginning to end, with the prologue and epilogue, and allow time for the music between the acts.

Mrs. Dangle : I hope to see it on the stage next.

Dangle : Well, Sir Fretful, I wish you may be able to get rid as easily of the newspaper criticisms as you do of ours.

Sir Fretful : The newspapers ! Sir, they are the most villainous—licentious—abominable—infernal. Not that I ever read them—no—I make it a rule never to look into a newspaper.

Dangle : You are quite right ; for it certainly must hurt an author of delicate feelings to see the liberties they take.

Sir Fretful : No, quite the contrary ! their abuse is, in fact, the best panegyric—I like it of all things. An author's reputation is only in danger from their support.

Sneer : Why, that's true—and that attack, now, on you the other day——

Sir Fretful : What ? where ?

Dangle : Ay, you mean in a paper of Thursday : it was completely ill-natured, to be sure.

Sir Fretful : Oh, so much the better.—Ha ! Ha ! Ha ! I wouldn't have it otherwise.

Dangle : Certainly it is only to be laughed at ; for——

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Sir Fretful : You don't happen to recollect what the fellow said, do you ?

Sneer : Pray, Dangle—Sir Fretful seems a little anxious——

Sir Fretful : O Lud, no !—anxious !—not I—not the least. I—but one may as well hear, you know.

Dangle : Sneer, do you recollect ? (*Aside to Sneer*) Make out something.

Sneer (*aside to Dangle*) : I will. (*Aloud*) Yes, yes, I remember perfectly.

Sir Fretful : Well, and pray now—not that it signifies—what might the gentleman say ?

Sneer : Why, he roundly asserts that you have not the slightest invention or original genius whatever ; though you are the greatest traducer of all other authors living.

Sir Fretful : Ha ! ha ! ha !—very good !

Sneer : That as to comedy, you have not one idea of your own, he believes, even in your commonplace-book—where stray jokes and pilfered witticisms are kept with as much method as the ledger of the lost and stolen office.

Sir Fretful : Ha ! ha ! ha !—very pleasant !

Sneer : Nay, that you are so unlucky as not to have the skill even to steal with taste :—but that you glean from the refuse of obscure volumes, where more judicious plagiarists have been before you ; so that the body of your work is a composition of dregs and sentiments—like a bad tavern's worst wine.

Sir Fretful : Ha ! ha !

Sneer : In your more serious efforts, he says, your bombast would be less intolerable, if the thoughts were ever suited to the expression ; but the homeliness of the sentiment stares through the fantastic encumbrance of its fine language, like a clown in one of the new uniforms !

Sir Fretful : Ha ! ha !

Sneer : That your occasional tropes and flowers suit the general coarseness of your style, as tambour sprigs would a ground of linsey-woolsey ; while your imitations of Shakespeare resemble the mimicry of Falstaff's page, and are about as near the standard as the original.

Sir Fretful : Ha !

Sneer : In short, that even the finest passages you steal

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are of no service to you ; for the poverty of your own language prevents their assimilating ; so that they lie on the surface like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize !

Sir Fretful (after great agitation) : Now, another person would be vexed at this !

Sneer : Oh ! but I wouldn't have told you—only to divert you.

Sir Fretful : I know it—I am diverted.—Ha ! ha ! ha !—not the least invention !—Ha ! ha ! ha !—very good !—very good !

Sneer : Yes—no genius ! ha ! ha ! ha !

Dangle : A severe rogue ! ha ! ha ! ha ! But you are quite right, Sir Fretful, never to read such nonsense.

Sir Fretful : To be sure—for if there is anything to one's praise, it is a foolish vanity to be gratified at it ; and, if it is abuse—why one is always sure to hear of it from one damned good-natured friend or other !

Enter Servant.

Servant : Sir, there is an Italian gentleman, with a French interpreter, and three young ladies, and a dozen musicians, who say they are sent by Lady Rondeau and Mrs. Fugue.

Dangle : Gadso ! they come by appointment !—Dear Mrs. Dangle, do let them know I'll see them directly.

Mrs. Dangle : You know, Mr. Dangle, I shan't understand a word they say.

Dangle : But you hear there's an interpreter.

Mrs. Dangle : Well, I'll try to endure their complaisance till you come. *[Exit.*

Servant : And Mr. Puff, sir, has sent word that the last rehearsal is to be this morning, and that he'll call on you presently.

Dangle : That's true—I shall certainly be at home. *(Exit Servant.)* Now, Sir Fretful, if you have a mind to have justice done you in the way of answer, egad, Mr. Puff's your man.

Sir Fretful : Psha ! sir, why should I wish to have it answered, when I tell you I am pleased at it ?

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Dangle : True, I had forgot that. But I hope you are not fretted at what Mr. Sneer——

Sir Fretful : Zounds ! no, Mr. Dangle ; don't I tell you these things never fret me in the least ?

Dangle : Nay, I only thought——

Sir Fretful : And let me tell you, Mr. Dangle, 'tis damned affronting in you to suppose that I am hurt when I tell you I am not.

Sneer : But why so warm, Sir Fretful ?

Sir Fretful : Gad's life ! Mr. Sneer, you are as absurd as Dangle : how often must I repeat it to you, that nothing can vex me but your supposing it possible for me to mind the damned nonsense you have been repeating to me !—and, let me tell you, if you continue to believe this, you must mean to insult me, gentlemen—and, then, your disrespect will affect me no more than the newspaper criticisms—and I shall treat it with exactly the same calm indifference and philosophic contempt—and so your servant. *[Exit.*

Sneer : Ha ! ha ! ha ! poor Sir Fretful ! Now will he go and vent his philosophy in anonymous abuse of all modern critics and authors.—But, Dangle, you must get your friend Puff to take me to the rehearsal of his tragedy.

Dangle : I'll answer for't, he'll thank you for desiring it. But come and help me to judge of this musical family : they are recommended by people of consequence, I assure you.

Sneer : I am at your disposal the whole morning !—but I thought you had been a decided critic in music as well as in literature.

Dangle : So I am—but I have a bad ear. I' faith, Sneer, though, I am afraid we were a little too severe on Sir Fretful—though he is my friend.

Sneer : Why, 'tis certain, that unnecessarily to mortify the vanity of any writer is a cruelty which mere dulness never can deserve ; but where a base and personal malignity usurps the place of literary emulation, the aggressor deserves neither quarter nor pity.

Dangle : That's true, egad !—though he's my friend !

The Critic.

29...A DAY AT THE BRANGHTONS'

YESTERDAY morning, we received an invitation to dine and spend the day at Mr. Branghton's ; and M. Du Bois, who was also invited, called to conduct us to Snow-hill.

Young Branghton received us at the door, and the first words he spoke were, " Do you know, Sisters a'n't dressed yet ? "

Then hurrying us into the house, he said to me, " Come, Miss, you shall go up stairs and catch 'em,—I daresay they're at the glass."

He would have taken my hand, but I declined this civility, and begged to follow Madame Duval.

Mr. Branghton then appeared, and led the way himself. We went, as before, up two pair of stairs, but the moment the father opened the door, the daughters both gave a loud scream. We all stopped, and then Miss Branghton called out, " Lord, Papa, what do you bring the company up here for ? why, Polly and I a'n't half dressed."

" More shame for you," answered he. " Here's your aunt, and cousin, and M. Du Bois, all waiting, and ne'er a room to take them to."

" Who'd have thought of their coming so soon ? " cried she : " I am sure for my part I thought Miss was used to nothing but quality hours."

" Why, I sha'n't be ready this half-hour yet," said Miss Polly ; " can't they stay in the shop, till we're dressed ? "

Mr. Branghton was very angry, and scolded them violently ; however, we were obliged to descend, and stools were procured for us in the shop, where we found the brother, who was highly delighted, he said, that his sisters had been *caught* ; and he thought proper to entertain me

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with a long account of their tediousness, and the many quarrels they all had together.

When, at length, these ladies were equipped to their satisfaction they made their appearance ; but before any conversation was suffered to pass between them and us, they had a long and most disagreeable dialogue with their father, to whose reprimands, though so justly incurred, they replied with the utmost pertness and rudeness, while their brother, all the time, laughed aloud.

The moment they perceived this, they were so much provoked, that, instead of making any apologies to Madame Duval, they next began to quarrel with him. " Tom, what do you laugh for ? I wonder what business you have to be always a laughing when Papa scolds us ? "

" Then what business have you to be such a while getting on your clothes ? You're never ready, you know well enough."

" Lord, sir, I wonder what's that to you ! I wish you'd mind your own affairs, and not trouble yourself about ours. How should a boy like you know any thing ? "

" A boy, indeed ! not such a boy, neither ; I'll warrant you'll be glad to be as young, when you come to be old maids."

This sort of dialogue we were amused with till dinner was ready, when we again mounted up two pair of stairs.

In our way, Miss Polly told me that her sister had asked Mr. Smith for his room to dine in, but he had refused to lend it ; " because," she said, " one day it happened to be a little greased : however, we shall have it to drink tea in, and then, perhaps, you may see him, and I assure you he's quite like one of the quality, and dresses as fine, and goes to balls and dances, and every thing quite in taste ;—and besides, Miss, he keeps a foot-boy of his own, too."

The dinner was ill-served, ill-cooked, and ill-managed. The maid who waited had so often to go down stairs for something that was forgotten, that the Branghtons were perpetually obliged to rise from table themselves, to get plates, knives and forks, bread or beer. Had they been without *pretensions*, all this would have seemed of no

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consequence ; but they aimed at appearing to advantage, and even fancied they succeeded. However, the most disagreeable part of our fare was, that the whole family continually disputed whose turn it was to rise, and whose to be allowed to sit still.

When this meal was over, Madame Duval, ever eager to discourse upon *her travels*, entered into an argument with Mr. Branghton, and, in broken English, M. Du Bois, concerning the French nation : and Miss Polly, then addressing herself to me, said, " Don't you think, Miss, it's very dull sitting up stairs here ? we'd better go down *to shop*, and then we shall see the people go by."

" Lord, Poll," said the brother, " you're always wanting to be staring and gaping ; and I'm sure you needn't be so fond of showing yourself, for you're ugly enough to frighten a horse."

" Ugly, indeed ! I wonder which is best, you or me. But, I tell you what, Tom, you've no need to give yourself such airs, for if you do, I'll tell Miss of you know what——"

" Who cares if you do ? you may tell what you will ; I don't mind——"

" Indeed," cried I, " I do not desire to hear any secrets."

" O, but I'm resolved I'll tell you, because Tom's so very spiteful. You must know, Miss, t'other night——"

" Poll," cried the brother, " if you tell of that, Miss shall know all about your meeting young Brown,—you know when !—So I'll be quits with you, one way or another."

Miss Polly coloured, and again proposed our going down stairs till Mr. Smith's room was ready for our reception.

" Aye, so we will," said Miss Branghton ; " I'll assure you, Cousin, we have some very genteel people pass by our shop sometimes. Polly and I always go and sit there, when we've cleaned ourselves."

" Yes, Miss," cried the brother, " they do nothing else all day long, when father don't scold them. But the best fun is, when they've got all their dirty things on, and all their hair about their ears, sometimes I send young Brown up stairs to them ; and then, there's such a fuss !—there they

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hide themselves, and run away, and squeal and squall like any thing mad : and so then I puts the two cats into the room, and I gives 'em a good whipping, and so that sets them a squalling too ; so there's such a noise, and such an uproar !—Lord, you can't think, Miss, what fun it is ! ”

This occasioned a fresh quarrel with the sisters ; at the end of which it was, at length, decided that we should go to the shop.

In our way down stairs, Miss Branghton said aloud, “ I wonder when Mr. Smith's room will be ready ? ”

“ So do I,” answered Polly ; “ I'm sure we should not do any harm to it now.”

This hint had not the desired effect ; for we were suffered to proceed very quietly.

As we entered the shop, I observed a young man, in deep mourning, leaning against the wall, with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the ground, apparently in profound and melancholy meditation : but the moment he perceived us, he started, and, making a passing bow, very abruptly retired. As I found he was permitted to go quite unnoticed, I could not forbear enquiring who he was.

“ Lord ! ” answered Miss Branghton, “ he's nothing but a poor Scotch poet.”

“ For my part,” said Miss Polly, “ I believe he's just starved, for I don't find he has any thing to live upon.”

“ Live upon ! ” cried the brother, “ why he's a poet, you know, so he may live upon learning.”

“ Aye, and good enough for him too,” said Miss Branghton, “ for he's as proud as he's poor.”

“ Like enough,” replied the brother, “ but, for all that, you won't find he will live without meat and drink : no, no, catch a Scotchman at that if you can ! why, they only come here for what they can get.”

“ I'm sure,” said Miss Branghton, “ I wonder Papa'll be such a fool as to let him stay in the house, for I dare say he'll never pay for his lodging.”

“ Why, no more he would if he could get another Lodger : you know the bill has been put up this fortnight. Miss, if

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you should hear of a person that wants a room, I assure you it is a very good one, for all it's up three pair of stairs."

I answered that as I had no acquaintance in London, I had no chance of assisting them. . . .

During this conversation, Mr. Smith's foot-boy came to Miss Branghton, and informed her, that his master said she might have the room now when she liked it, for that he was presently going out.

This very genteel message, though it perfectly satisfied the Miss Branghtons, by no means added to my desire of being introduced to this gentleman : and upon their rising, with intention to accept his offer, I begged they would excuse my attending them, and said I would sit with Madame Duval till the tea was ready.

I therefore once more went up two pair of stairs, with young Branghton, who insisted upon accompanying me ; and there remained, till Mr. Smith's foot-boy summoned us to tea, when I followed Madame Duval into the dining-room.

The Miss Branghtons were seated at one window, and Mr. Smith was lolling indolently out of the other. They all approached us at our entrance, and Mr. Smith, probably to shew he was master of the apartment, most officiously handed me to a great chair, at the upper end of the room, without taking any notice of Madame Duval, till I rose, and offered her my own seat.

Leaving the rest of the company to entertain themselves, he, very abruptly, began to address himself to me, in a style of gallantry equally new and disagreeable to me. It is true, no man can possibly pay me greater compliments, or make more fine speeches, than Sir Clement Willoughby, yet his language, though too flowery, is always that of a gentleman, and his address and manners are so very superior to those of the inhabitants of this house, that to make any comparison between him and Mr. Smith would be extremely unjust. This latter seems very desirous of appearing a man of gaiety and spirit ; but his vivacity is so low bred, and his whole behaviour so forward and disagreeable, that I should prefer

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the company of *dullness* itself, even as that goddess is described by Pope, to that of this *sprightly* young man.

He made many apologies that he had not lent his room for our dinner, which, he said, he should certainly have done, had he seen me first ; and he assured me, that when I came again, he should be very glad to oblige me.

I told him with sincerity, that every part of the house was equally indifferent to me.

“ Why, Ma’am, the truth is, Miss Biddy and Polly take no care of any thing, else, I’m sure, they should be always welcome to my room ; for I am never so happy as in obliging the ladies,—that’s my character, Ma’am ;—but, really, the last time they had it, every thing was made so greasy and so nasty, that, upon my word, to a man who wishes to have things a little genteel, it was quite cruel.”

“ Now, as to you, Ma’am, it’s quite another thing ; for I should not mind if every thing I had was spoilt, for the sake of having the pleasure to oblige you ; and, I assure you, Ma’am, it makes me quite happy, that I have a room good enough to receive you.”

This elegant speech was followed by many others, so much in the same style, that to write them would be superfluous ; and as he did not allow me a moment to speak to any other person, the rest of the evening was consumed in a painful attention to this irksome young man, who seemed to intend appearing before me to the utmost advantage.

Evelina.

30...DOCTOR JOHNSON IN HIGH SPIRITS

Now for this morning's breakfast.—Doctor Johnson, as usual, came last into the library; he was in high spirits, and full of mirth and sport. I had the honour of sitting next to him: and now, all at once, he flung aside his reserve, thinking, perhaps, that it was time I should fling aside mine.

Mrs. Thrale told him that she intended taking me to Mr. T——'s.

"So you ought, madam," cried he; "'tis your business to be cicerone to her."

Then suddenly he snatched my hand, and kissing it—

"Ah!" he added, "they will little think what a tartar you carry to them!"

"No, that they won't!" cried Mrs. Thrale; "Miss Burney looks so meek and so quiet, nobody would suspect what a comical girl she is; but I believe she has a great deal of malice at heart."

"Oh, she's a toad!" cried the doctor, laughing—"a sly young rogue! with her Smiths and her Branghtons!"

"Why, Dr. Johnson," said Mrs. Thrale, "I hope you are very well this morning! If one may judge by your spirits and good humour, the fever you threatened us with is gone off."

He had complained that he was going to be ill last night.

"Why, no, madam, no," answered he, "I am not yet well; I could not sleep at all; there I lay, restless and uneasy, and thinking all the time of Miss Burney. Perhaps I have offended her, thought I; perhaps she is angry; I have seen her but once, and I talked to her of a rasher!—Were you angry?"

I think I need not tell you my answer.

"I have been endeavouring to find some excuse," continued he, "and, as I could not sleep, I got up, and looked

DOCTOR JOHNSON IN HIGH SPIRITS

for some authority for the word, and I find, madam, it is used by Dryden : in one of his prologues, he says—‘ And snatch a homely rasher from the coals.’ So you must not mind me, madam. I say strange things, but I mean no harm.”

I was almost afraid he thought I was really idiot enough to have taken him seriously ; but, a few minutes after, he put his hand on my arm, and shaking his head, exclaimed—

“ Oh, you are a sly little rogue ! What a Holborn beau have you drawn ! ”

“ Ay, Miss Burney,” said Mrs. Thrale, “ the Holborn beau is Dr. Johnson’s favourite ; and we have all your characters by heart, from Mr. Smith up to Lady Louisa.”

“ Oh, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith is the man ! ” cried he, laughing violently. “ Harry Fielding never drew so good a character !—such a fine varnish of low politeness !—Such a struggle to appear a gentleman ! Madam, there is no character better drawn anywhere, in any book or by any author.”

I almost poked myself under the table. Never did I feel so delicious a confusion since I was born ! But he added a great deal more, only I cannot recollect his exact words, and I do not choose to give him mine.

About noon, when I went into the library, book hunting, Mrs. Thrale came to me. We had a very nice confab about various books, and exchanged opinions and imitations of Baretti ; she told me many excellent tales of him, and I, in turn, related my stories.

She gave me a long and very entertaining account of Dr. Goldsmith, who was intimately known here ; but in speaking of “ The Good-Natured Man,” when I extolled my favourite Croaker, I found that admirable character was a downright theft from Dr. Johnson. Look at “ The Rambler,” and you will find Suspicious is the man, and that not merely the idea, but the particulars of the character, are all stolen thence !

While we were yet reading this “ Rambler,” Dr. Johnson came in ; we told him what we were about.

DOCTOR JOHNSON IN HIGH SPIRITS

“ Ah, madam ! ” cried he, “ Goldsmith was not scrupulous, but he would have been a great man had he known the real value of his own internal resources.”

“ Miss Burney,” said Mrs. Thrale, “ is fond of his ‘ Vicar of Wakefield ’ ; and so am I—don’t you like it, sir ? ”

“ No, madam ; it is very faulty, there is nothing of real life in it, and very little of nature. It is a mere fanciful performance.”

He then seated himself upon a sofa, and calling to me, said, “ Come, Evelina, come and sit by me ! ”

I obeyed, and he took me almost in his arms,—that is, one of his arms, for one would go three times at least round me—and, half laughing, half serious, he charged me to “ be a good girl ! ”

Diary.

31...FULFILLING A PROMISE

MRS. JOHN DASHWOOD now installed herself mistress of Norland ; and her mother and sisters-in-law were degraded to the condition of visitors. As such, however, they were treated by her with quiet civility ; and by her husband with as much kindness as he could feel towards anybody beyond himself, his wife, and their child. He really pressed them, with some earnestness, to consider Norland as their home ; and as no plan appeared so eligible to Mrs. Dashwood as remaining there till she could accommodate herself with a house in the neighbourhood, his invitation was accepted.

A continuance in a place where everything reminded her of former delight was exactly what suited her mind. In seasons of cheerfulness, no temper could be more cheerful than hers, or possess, in a greater degree, that sanguine expectation of happiness which is happiness itself. But in sorrow she must be equally carried away by her fancy, and as far beyond consolation as in pleasure she was beyond alloy.

Mrs. John Dashwood did not at all approve of what her husband intended to do for his sisters. To take three thousand pounds from the fortune of their dear little boy would be impoverishing him to the most dreadful degree. She begged him to think again on the subject. How could he answer it to himself to rob his child, and his only child too, of so large a sum ? And what possible claim could the Miss Dashwoods, who were related to him only by half blood, which she considered as no relationship at all, have on his generosity to so large an amount ? It was very well known that no affection was ever supposed to exist between the children of any man by different marriages ; and why

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was he to ruin himself, and their poor little Harry, by giving away all his money to his half sisters ?

“ It was my father’s last request to me,” replied her husband, “ that I should assist his widow and daughters.”

“ He did not know what he was talking of, I daresay ; ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child.”

“ He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny ; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do. Perhaps it would have been as well if he had left it wholly to myself. He could hardly suppose I should neglect them. But as he required the promise, I could not do less than give it—at least I thought so at the time. The promise, therefore, was given, and must be performed. Something must be done for them whenever they leave Norland and settle in a new home.”

“ Well, then, let something be done for them ; but that something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider,” she added, “ that when the money is once parted with, it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever. If, indeed, it could ever be restored to our poor little boy——”

“ Why, to be sure,” said her husband, very gravely, “ that would make a great difference. The time may come when Harry will regret that so large a sum was parted with. If he should have a numerous family, for instance, it would be a very convenient addition.”

“ To be sure it would ”

“ Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half. Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes ! ”

“ Oh ! beyond anything great ! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if *really* his sisters ? And as it is—only half blood ! But you have such a generous spirit ! ”

FULFILLING A PROMISE

"I would not wish to do anything mean," he replied. "One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little. No one, at least, can think I have not done enough for them : even themselves, they can hardly expect more."

"There is no knowing what *they* may expect," said the lady ; "but we are not to think of their expectations : the question is, what you can afford to do."

"Certainly ; and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds apiece. As it is, without any addition of mine they will each have above three thousand pounds on their mother's death—a very comfortable fortune for any young woman."

"To be sure it is ; and, indeed, it strikes me that they can want no addition at all. They will have ten thousand pounds divided amongst them. If they marry, they will be sure of doing well ; and if they do not, they may all live very comfortably together on the interest of ten thousand pounds."

"That is very true, and, therefore, I do not know whether, upon the whole, it would not be more advisable to do something for their mother while she lives, rather than for them—something of the annuity kind, I mean. My sisters would feel the good effects of it as well as herself. A hundred a year would make them all perfectly comfortable."

His wife hesitated a little, however, in giving her consent to this plan.

"To be sure," said she, "it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years, we shall be completely taken in."

"Fifteen years, my dear Fanny ! Her life cannot be worth half that purchase."

"Certainly not ; but if you observe, people always live for ever when there is any annuity to be paid them ; and she is very stout and healthy, and hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business ; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. You are not aware of what you are doing. I have known a great deal of the trouble of

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annuities ; for my mother was clogged with the payment of three to old superannuated servants by my father's will, and it is amazing how disagreeable she found it. Twice every year these annuities were to be paid ; and then there was the trouble of getting it to them ; and then one of them was said to have died, and afterwards it turned out to be no such thing. My mother was quite sick of it. Her income was not her own, she said, with such perpetual claims on it ; and it was the more unkind in my father, because, otherwise, the money would have been entirely at my mother's disposal, without any restriction whatever. It has given me such an abhorrence of annuities that I am sure I would not pin myself down to the payment of one for all the world."

"It is certainly an unpleasant thing," replied Mr. Dashwood, "to have those kind of yearly drains on one's income. One's fortune, as your mother justly says, is *not* one's own. To be tied down to the regular payment of such a sum, on every rent-day, is by no means desirable : it takes away one's independence."

"Undoubtedly ; and, after all, you have no thanks for it. They think themselves secure ; you do no more than what is expected, and it raises no gratitude at all. If I were you, whatever I did should be done at my own discretion entirely. I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years hence to spare a hundred, or even fifty pounds, from our own expenses."

"I believe you are right, my love ; it will be better that there should be no annuity in the case. Whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance, because they would only enlarge their style of living if they felt sure of a larger income, and would not be sixpence the richer for it at the end of the year. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds now and then will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father."

"To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your

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giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you ; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing further ; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year apiece, and of course they will pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether they will have five hundred a year amongst them ; and what on earth can four women want for more than that ? They will live so cheap ! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants ; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind. Only conceive how comfortable they will be ! Five hundred a year ! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it ; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give *you* something."

"Upon my word," said Mr. Dashwood, "I believe you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by such acts of assistance and kindness to them as you have described. When my mother removes into another house, my services shall be readily given to accommodate her as far as I can. Some little present of furniture, too, may be acceptable then."

"Certainly," returned Mrs. John Dashwood. "But, however, *one* thing must be considered. When your father and mother moved to Norland, though the furniture of Stanhill was sold, all the china, plate, and linen was saved, and is now left to your mother. Her house will therefore be almost completely fitted up as soon as she takes it."

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“ That is a material consideration undoubtedly, a valuable legacy indeed ! And yet some of the plate would have been a very pleasant addition to our own stock here.”

“ Yes ; and the set of breakfast-china is twice as handsome as what belongs to this house ; a great deal too handsome, in my opinion, for any place *they* can ever afford to live in. But, however, so it is. Your father thought only of *them*. And I must say this, that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes ; for we very well know that if he could he would have left almost everything in the world to *them*.”

This argument was irresistible. It gave to his intentions whatever of decision was wanting before ; and he finally resolved that it would be absolutely unnecessary, if not highly indecorous, to do more for the widow and children of his father than such kind of neighbourly acts as his own wife pointed out.

Sense and Sensibility.

32...MR. COLLINS'S PROPOSAL

THE next day opened a new scene at Longbourn. Mr. Collins made his declaration in form. Having resolved to do it without loss of time, as his leave of absence extended only to the following Saturday, and having no feelings of diffidence to make it distressing to himself even at the moment, he set about it in a very orderly manner, with all the observances which he supposed a regular part of the business. On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words,—

“ May I hope, madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience with her in the course of this morning ? ”

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet instantly answered,—

“ Oh dear ! Yes, certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy ; I am sure she can have no objection.—Come, Kitty ; I want you upstairs.” And gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out,—

“ Dear ma’am, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.”

“ No, no ; nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are.” And upon Elizabeth’s seeming really, with vexed and embarrassed looks, about to escape, she added, “ Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.”

Elizabeth would not oppose such an injunction ; and a moment’s consideration making her also sensible that it would be wisest to get it over as soon and as quietly as possible, she sat down again, and tried to conceal, by incessant employment, the feelings which were divided between

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distress and diversion. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone Mr. Collins began,—

“ Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty, so far from doing you any disservice, rather adds to your other perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little unwillingness ; but allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother’s permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse, however your natural delicacy may lead you to dissemble ; my attentions have been too marked to be mistaken. Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying, and, moreover, for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife, as I certainly did.”

The idea of Mr. Collins, with all his solemn composure, being run away with by his feelings, made Elizabeth so near laughing that she could not use the short pause he allowed in any attempt to stop him further, and he continued,—

“ My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish ; secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness ; and thirdly, which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. Twice has she condescended to give me her opinion (unasked too !) on this subject ; and it was but the very Saturday night before I left Hunsford—between our pools at quadrille, while Mrs. Jenkinson was arranging Miss De Bourgh’s footstool—that she said, ‘ Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for *my* sake and for your *own* ; let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way. This is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her to Hunsford, and I will visit her.’ Allow

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me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that I do not reckon the notice and kindness of Lady Catherine de Bourgh as among the least of the advantages in my power to offer. You will find her manners beyond anything I can describe ; and your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite. Thus much for my general intention in favour of matrimony ; it remains to be told why my views were directed to Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where, I assure you, there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that being, as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer), I could not satisfy myself without resolving to choose a wife from among his daughters, that the loss to them might be as little as possible when the melancholy event takes place which, however, as I have already said, may not be for several years. This has been my motive, my fair cousin, and I flatter myself it will not sink me in your esteem. And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. To fortune I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father, since I am well aware that it could not be complied with, and that one thousand pounds in the four per cents., which will not be yours till after your mother's decease, is all that you may ever be entitled to. On that head, therefore, I shall be uniformly silent, and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married."

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

"You are too hasty, sir," she cried. "You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it without further loss of time. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to do otherwise than decline them."

"I am not now to learn," replied Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand, "that it is usual with young ladies

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to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour ; and that sometimes the refusal is repeated a second or even a third time. I am, therefore, by no means discouraged by what you have just said, and shall hope to lead you to the altar ere long."

"Upon my word, sir," cried Elizabeth, "your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who would make *you* so. Nay, were your friend Lady Catherine to know me, I am persuaded she would find me in every respect ill qualified for the situation."

"Were it certain that Lady Catherine would think so," said Mr. Collins, very gravely—"but I cannot imagine that her ladyship would at all disapprove of you. And you may be certain that when I have the honour of seeing her again I shall speak in the highest terms of your modesty, economy, and other amiable qualifications."

"Indeed, Mr. Collins, all praise of me will be unnecessary. You must give me leave to judge for myself, and pay me the compliment of believing what I say. I wish you very happy and very rich, and by refusing your hand do all in my power to prevent your being otherwise. In making me the offer, you must have satisfied the delicacy of your feelings with regard to my family, and may take possession of Longbourn estate whenever it falls, without any self-reproach. This matter may be considered, therefore, as finally settled." And rising as she thus spoke, she would have quitted the room, had not Mr. Collins thus addressed her,—

"When I do myself the honour of speaking to you next on the subject, I shall hope to receive a more favourable answer than you have now given me ; though I am far from accusing you of cruelty at present, because I know it to be

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the established custom of your sex to reject a man on the first application, and perhaps you have even now said as much to encourage my suit as would be consistent with the true delicacy of the female character."

"Really, Mr. Collins," cried Elizabeth, with some warmth, "you puzzle me exceedingly. If what I have hitherto said can appear to you in the form of encouragement, I know not how to express my refusal in such a way as may convince you of its being one."

"You must give me leave to flatter myself, my dear cousin, that your refusal of my addresses are merely words of course. My reasons for believing it are briefly these:—It does not appear to me that my hand is unworthy your acceptance, or that the establishment I can offer would be any other than highly desirable. My situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; and you should take it into further consideration that, in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. Your portion is, unhappily, so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must, therefore, conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females."

"I do assure you, sir, that I have no pretensions whatever to that kind of elegance which consists in tormenting a respectable man. I would rather be paid the compliment of being believed sincere. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer? Do not consider me now as an elegant female intending to plague you, but as a rational creature speaking the truth from her heart."

"You are uniformly charming!" cried he, with an air of awkward gallantry; "and I am persuaded that, when sanctioned by the express authority of both your

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excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable."

To such perseverance in wilful self-deception Elizabeth would make no reply, and immediately and in silence withdrew, determined that, if he persisted in considering her repeated refusals as flattering encouragement, to apply to her father, whose negative might be uttered in such a manner as must be decisive, and whose behaviour at least could not be mistaken for the affectation and coquetry of an elegant female.

Mr. Collins was not left long to the silent contemplation of his successful love ; for Mrs. Bennet, having dawdled about in the vestibule to watch for the end of the conference, no sooner saw Elizabeth open the door and with quick step pass her towards the staircase, than she entered the breakfast-room, and congratulated both him and herself in warm terms on the happy prospect of their nearer connection. Mr. Collins received and returned these felicitations with equal pleasure, and then proceeded to relate the particulars of their interview, with the result of which he trusted he had every reason to be satisfied, since the refusal which his cousin had steadfastly given him would naturally flow from her bashful modesty and the genuine delicacy of her character.

This information, however, startled Mrs. Bennet : she would have been glad to be equally satisfied that her daughter had meant to encourage him by protesting against his proposals, but she dared not believe it, and could not help saying so. " But depend upon it, Mr. Collins," she added, " that Lizzy shall be brought to reason. I will speak to her about it myself directly. She is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interest ; but I will *make* her know it."

" Pardon me for interrupting you, madam," cried Mr. Collins ; " but if she is really headstrong and foolish, I know not whether she would altogether be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation, who naturally looks for happiness in the marriage state. If, therefore, she actually

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persists in rejecting my suit, perhaps it were better not to force her into accepting me, because, if liable to such defects of temper, she could not contribute much to my felicity."

"Sir, you quite misunderstand me," said Mrs. Bennet, alarmed. "Lizzy is only headstrong in such matters as these; in everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we shall very soon settle it with her, I am sure."

She would not give him time to reply, but hurrying instantly to her husband, called out, as she entered the library,—

"O Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him; and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have *her*."

Mr. Bennet raised his eyes from his book as she entered, and fixed them on her face with a calm unconcern, which was not in the least altered by her communication.

"I have not the pleasure of understanding you," said he, when she had finished her speech. "Of what are you talking?"

"Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy. Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy."

"And what am I to do on the occasion? It seems a hopeless business."

"Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him."

"Let her be called down. She shall hear my opinion."

Mrs. Bennet rang the bell, and Miss Elizabeth was summoned to the library.

"Come here, child," cried her father, as she appeared. "I have sent for you on an affair of importance. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?" Elizabeth replied that it was. "Very well. And this offer of marriage you have refused?"

"I have, sir."

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"Very well. We now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it.—Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet?"

"Yes, or I will never see her again."

"An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*."

Elizabeth could not but smile at such a conclusion of such a beginning; but Mrs. Bennet, who had persuaded herself that her husband regarded the affair as she wished, was excessively disappointed.

"What do you mean, Mr. Bennet, by talking in this way? You promised me to *insist* upon her marrying him."

"My dear," replied her husband, "I have two small favours to request—first, that you will allow me the free use of my understanding on the present occasion; and, secondly, of my room. I shall be glad to have the library to myself as soon as may be."

Pride and Prejudice.

33...THE ORIGIN OF ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term *Chofang*, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following.

The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely

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sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower ; a premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling* ! Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious ; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

“ You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring ? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you ! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say ? ”

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"O father, the pig, the pig ! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord !"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze ; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that

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some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision, and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Essays of Elia.

34...MR. CAUDLE HAS LENT FIVE POUNDS
TO A FRIEND

“ You ought to be very rich, Mr. Caudle. I wonder who’d lend you five pounds ? But so it is : a wife may work and may slave ! Ha, dear ! the many things that might have been done with five pounds. As if people picked up money in the street ! But you always were a fool, Mr. Caudle ! I’ve wanted a black satin gown these three years, and that five pounds would have entirely bought it. But it’s no matter how I go,—not at all. Everybody says I don’t dress as becomes your wife—and I don’t ; but what’s that to you, Mr. Caudle ? Nothing. Oh, no ! you can have fine feelings for everybody but those belonging to you. I wish people knew you, as I do—that’s all. You like to be called liberal—and your poor family pays for it.

“ All the girls want bonnets, and where they’re to come from I can’t tell. Half five pounds would have bought ’em—but now they must go without. Of course, *they* belong to you : and anybody but your own flesh and body, Mr. Caudle !

“ The man called for the water-rate to-day ; but I should like to know how people are to pay taxes, who throw away five pounds to every fellow that asks them ?

“ Perhaps you don’t know that Jack, this morning, knocked his shuttlecock through his bedroom window. I was going to send for the glazier to mend it ; but after you lent that five pounds I was sure we couldn’t afford it. Oh, no ! the window must go as it is ; and pretty weather for a dear child to sleep with a broken window. He’s got a cold already on his lungs, and I shouldn’t at all wonder if that broken window settled him. If the dear boy dies, his

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death will be upon his father's head ; for I'm sure we can't now pay to mend windows. We might though, and do a good many more things too, if people didn't throw away their five pounds.

"Next Tuesday the fire-insurance is due. I should like to know how it's to be paid ? Why, it can't be paid at all ! That five pounds would have more than done it—and now, insurance is out of the question. And there never were so many fires as there are now. I shall never close my eyes all night,—but what's that to you, so people can call you liberal, Mr. Caudle ? Your wife and children may all be burnt alive in their beds—as all of us to a certainty shall be, for the insurance *must* drop. And after we've insured for so many years ! But how, I should like to know, are people to insure who make ducks and drakes of their five pounds ?

"I did think we might go to Margate this summer. There's poor little Caroline, I'm sure she wants the sea. But no, dear creature ! she must stop at home—all of us must stop at home—she'll go into a consumption, there's no doubt of that ; yes—sweet little angel !—I've made up my mind to lose her, *now*. The child might have been saved ; but people can't save their children and throw away their five pounds too.

"I wonder where poor little Mopsy is ! While you were lending that five pounds, the dog ran out of the shop. You know, I never let it go into the street, for fear it should be bit by some mad dog, and come home and bite all the children. It wouldn't now at all astonish me if the animal was to come back with the hydrophobia, and give it to all the family. However, what's your family to you, so you can play the liberal creature with five pounds.

"Do you hear that shutter, how it's banging to and fro ? Yes,—I know what it wants as well as you ; it wants a new fastening. I was going to send for the blacksmith to-day, but now it's out of the question : *now* it must bang of nights, since you've thrown away five pounds.

"Ha ! there's the soot falling down the chimney. If I hate the smell of anything, it's the smell of soot. And you

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know it ; but what are my feelings to you ? *Sweep the chimney !* Yes, it's all very fine to say sweep the chimney—but how are chimneys to be swept—how are they to be paid for by people who don't take care of their five pounds ?

“ Do you hear the mice running about the room ? *I* hear them. If they were to drag only you out of bed, it would be no matter. *Set a trap for them !* Yes, it's easy enough to say—set a trap for 'em. But how are people to afford mouse-traps, when every day they lose five pounds ?

“ Hark ! I'm sure there's a noise downstairs. It wouldn't at all surprise me if there were thieves in the house. Well, it *may* be the cat ; but thieves are pretty sure to come in some night. There's a wretched fastening to the back-door ; but these are not times to afford bolts and bars, when people won't take care of their five pounds.

“ Mary Anne ought to have gone to the dentist's to-morrow. She wants three teeth taken out. Now, it can't be done. Three teeth that quite disfigure the child's mouth. But there they must stop, and spoil the sweetest face that ever was made. Otherwise she'd have been a wife for a lord. Now, when she grows up, who'll have her ? Nobody. We shall die, and leave her alone and unprotected in the world. But what do you care for that ? Nothing ; so you can squander away five pounds.”

“ *And thus,*” comments Caudle, “ *according to my wife, she, dear soul !—couldn't have a satin gown—the girls couldn't have new bonnets—the water-rate must stand over—Jack must get his death through a broken window—our fire-insurance couldn't be paid, so that we should all fall victims to the devouring element—we couldn't go to Margate, and Caroline would go to an early grave—the dog would come home and bite us all mad—the shutter would go banging for ever—the soot would always fall—the mice never let us have a wink of sleep—thieves be always breaking in the house—our dear Mary Anne be for ever left an unprotected maid,—and with other evils falling upon us, all, all because I would go on lending five pounds !*”

Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures.

35...THE PANIC

[There had been one or two burglaries at Cranford, and all sorts of uncomfortable rumours got afloat in the town. An attempt had been made on Mrs. Jamieson's house ; at least there were men's footsteps to be seen underneath the kitchen windows and Carlo had barked all night, and it was said that Mr. Hoggins, the local surgeon-dentist, had been attacked and robbed at his own door. This report, however, Mr. Hoggins emphatically denied, and maintained that the only robbery of which he knew anything was that of a neck of mutton by the cat.]

AFTER we had duly condemned the want of candour which Mr. Hoggins had evinced, and abused men in general, taking him for the representative and type, we got round to the subject about which we had been talking when Miss Pole came in ; namely, how far, in the present disturbed state of the country, we could venture to accept an invitation which Miss Matty had just received from Mrs. Forrester, to come as usual and keep the anniversary of her wedding-day by drinking tea with her at five o'clock, and playing a quiet pool afterwards. Mrs. Forrester had said that she asked us with some diffidence, because the roads were, she feared, very unsafe. But she suggested that perhaps one of us would not object to take the sedan, and that the others, by walking briskly, might keep up with the long trot of the chairmen, and so we might all arrive safely at Over Place, a suburb of the town. (No ; that is too large an expression : a small cluster of houses separated from Cranford by about two hundred yards of a dark and lonely lane.) There was no doubt but that a similar note was awaiting Miss Pole at home ; so her call was a very fortunate affair, as it enabled us to consult together. . . . We would all much rather have declined this invitation ; but we felt that it would not be

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quite kind to Mrs. Forrester, who would otherwise be left to a solitary retrospect of her not very happy or fortunate life. Miss Matty and Miss Pole had been visitors on this occasion for many years, and now they gallantly determined to nail their colours to the mast, and to go through Darkness-lane rather than fail in loyalty to their friend.

But when the evening came, Miss Matty (for it was she who was voted into the chair, as she had a cold) before being shut down in the sedan, like jack-in-the-box, implored the chairmen, whatever might befall, not to run away and leave her fastened up there, to be murdered ; and even after they had promised, I saw her tighten her features into the stern determination of a martyr, and she gave me a melancholy and ominous shake of the head through the glass. However, we got there safely, only rather out of breath, for it was who could trot hardest through Darkness-lane, and I am afraid poor Miss Matty was sadly jolted.

Mrs. Forrester had made extra preparations, in acknowledgment of our exertion in coming to see her through such dangers. The usual forms of genteel ignorance as to what her servants might send up were all gone through ; and harmony and Preference seemed likely to be the order of the evening, but for an interesting conversation that began I don't know how, but which had relation, of course, to the robbers who infested the neighbourhood of Cranford.

Having braved the dangers of Darkness-lane, and thus having a little stock of reputation for courage to fall back upon ; and also, I dare say, desirous of proving ourselves superior to men (*videlicet* Mr. Hoggins) in the article of candour, we began to relate our individual fears, and the private precautions we each of us took. I owned that my pet apprehension was eyes—eyes looking at me, and watching me, glittering out from some dull, flat, wooden surface ; and that if I dared to go up to my looking-glass when I was panic-stricken, I should certainly turn it round, with its back towards me, for fear of seeing eyes behind me looking out of the darkness. I saw Miss Matty nerving herself up for a confession ; and at last out it came. She owned that,

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ever since she had been a girl, she had dreaded being caught by her last leg, just as she was getting into bed, by some one concealed under it. She said, when she was younger and more active, she used to take a flying leap from a distance, and so bring both her legs up safely into bed at once ; but that this had always annoyed Deborah, who piqued herself upon getting into bed gracefully, and she had given it up in consequence. But now the old terror would often come over her, especially since Miss Pole's house had been attacked (we had got quite to believe in the fact of the attack having taken place), and yet it was very unpleasant to think of looking under a bed, and seeing a man concealed, with a great, fierce face staring out at you ; so she had bethought herself of something—perhaps I had noticed that she had told Martha to buy her a penny ball, such as children play with—and now she rolled this ball under the bed every night ; if it came out on the other side, well and good ; if not she always took care to have her hand on the bell-rope, and meant to call out John and Harry, just as if she expected men-servants to answer her ring.

We all applauded this ingenious contrivance, and Miss Matty sank back into satisfied silence, with a look at Mrs. Forrester as if to ask for *her* private weakness.

Mrs. Forrester looked askance at Miss Pole, and tried to change the subject a little by telling us that she had borrowed a boy from one of the neighbouring cottages and promised his parents a hundredweight of coals at Christmas, and his supper every evening, for the loan of him at nights. She had instructed him in his possible duties when he first came ; and, finding him sensible, she had given him the Major's sword (the Major was her late husband), and desired him to put it very carefully behind his pillow at night, turning the edge towards the head of the pillow. He was a sharp lad, she was sure ; for, spying out the Major's cocked hat, he had said, if he might have that to wear, he was sure he could frighten two Englishmen, or four Frenchmen, any day. But she had impressed upon him anew that he was to lose no time in putting on hats or anything else ; but, if he heard any noise, he was to run at it with his drawn sword.

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On my suggesting that some accident might occur from such slaughterous and indiscriminate directions, and that he might rush on Jenny getting up to wash, and have spitted her before he had discovered that she was not a Frenchman, Mrs. Forrester said she did not think that that was likely, for he was a very sound sleeper, and generally had to be well shaken or cold-pigged in a morning before they could rouse him. She sometimes thought such dead sleep must be owing to the hearty suppers the poor lad ate, for he was half-starved at home, and she told Jenny to see that he got a good meal at night.

Still this was no confession of Mrs. Forrester's peculiar timidity, and we urged her to tell us what she thought would frighten her more than anything. She paused, and stirred the fire, and snuffed the candles, and then she said, in a sounding whisper—

“ Ghosts ! ”

She looked at Miss Pole, as much as to say she had declared it, and would stand by it. Such a look was a challenge in itself. Miss Pole came down upon her with indigestion, spectral illusions, optical delusions, and a great deal out of Dr. Ferrier and Dr. Hibbert besides. Miss Matty had rather a leaning to ghosts, as I have mentioned before, and what little she did say was all on Mrs. Forrester's side, who, emboldened by sympathy, protested that ghosts were a part of her religion ; that surely she, the widow of a Major in the army, knew what to be frightened at, and what not ; in short, I never saw Mrs. Forrester so warm either before or since, for she was a gentle, meek, enduring old lady in most things. Not all the elder-wine that ever was mulled could this night wash out the remembrance of this difference between Miss Pole and her hostess. Indeed, when the elder-wine was brought in, it gave rise to a new burst of discussion ; for Jenny, the little maiden who staggered under the tray, had to give evidence of having seen a ghost with her own eyes, not so many nights ago, in Darkness-lane, the very lane we were to go through on our way home.

In spite of the uncomfortable feeling which this last consideration gave me, I could not help being amused at

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Jenny's position, which was exceedingly like that of a witness being examined and cross-examined by two counsel who are not at all scrupulous about asking leading questions. The conclusion I arrived at was, that Jenny had certainly seen something beyond what a fit of indigestion would have caused. A lady all in white, and without her head, was what she deposed and adhered to, supported by a consciousness of the secret sympathy of her mistress under the withering scorn with which Miss Pole regarded her. And not only she, but many others, had seen this headless lady, who sat by the roadside wringing her hands as in deep grief. Mrs. Forrester looked at us from time to time with an air of conscious triumph ; but then she had not to pass through Darkness-lane before she could bury herself beneath her own familiar bed-clothes.

We preserved a discreet silence as to the headless lady while we were putting on our things to go home, for there was no knowing how near the ghostly head and ears might be, or what spiritual connection they might be keeping up with the unhappy body in Darkness-lane ; and, therefore, even Miss Pole felt that it was as well not to speak lightly on such subjects, for fear of vexing or insulting that woe-begone trunk. At least, so I conjecture ; for, instead of the busy clatter usual in the operation, we tied on our cloaks as sadly as mutes at a funeral. Miss Matty drew the curtains round the windows of the chair to shut out disagreeable sights, and the men (either because they were in spirits that their labours were so nearly ended, or because they were going down hill) set off at such a round and merry pace that it was all Miss Pole and I could do to keep up with them. She had breath for nothing beyond an imploring "Don't leave me !" uttered as she clutched my arm so tightly that I could not have quitted her, ghost or no ghost. What a relief it was when the men, weary of their burden and their quick trot, stopped just where Headingley-causeway branches off from Darkness-lane ! Miss Pole unloosed me and caught at one of the men.

"Could not you—could not you take Miss Matty round

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by Headingley-causeway?—the pavement in Darkness-lane jolts so, and she is not very strong.”

A smothered voice was heard from the inside of the chair :

“ Oh ! pray go on ! What is the matter ? What is the matter ? I will give you sixpence more to go on very fast ; pray don’t stop here.”

“ And I’ll give you a shilling,” said Miss Pole, with tremulous dignity, “ if you’ll go by Headingley-causeway.”

The two men grunted acquiescence and took up the chair, and went along the causeway, which certainly answered Miss Pole’s kind purpose of saving Miss Matty’s bones ; for it was covered with soft thick mud, and even a fall there would have been easy till the getting up came, when there might have been some difficulty in extrication.

Cranford.

36...MAJOR PENDENNIS FIGHTS THE
DRAGON

[Arthur Pendennis has become engaged to the Fotheringay, otherwise Emily Costigan, a third-rate actress; and Arthur's uncle, Major Pendennis, is determined to break off the match. With this object he goes down to negotiate with her disreputable old father, Captain Costigan.]

"MUST you go?" said the Major. "Can't you give us a few minutes more, Miss Fotheringay? Before you leave us, permit an old fellow to shake you by the hand, and believe that I am proud to have had the honour of making your acquaintance, and am most sincerely anxious to be your friend."

Miss Fotheringay made a low curtsy at the conclusion of this gallant speech, and the Major followed her retreating steps to the door, where he squeezed her hand with the kindest and most paternal pressure. Bows was puzzled with this exhibition of cordiality. "The lad's relatives can't be really wanting to marry him to her," he thought; and so they departed.

"Now for it," thought Major Pendennis; and as for Mr. Costigan, he profited instantaneously by his daughter's absence to drink up the rest of the wine, and tossed off one bumper after another of the Madeira from the Grapes with an eager shaking hand. The Major came up to the table, and took up his glass and drained it with a jovial smack. If it had been Lord Steyne's particular, and not public-house Cape, he could not have appeared to relish it more.

"Capital Madeira, Captain Costigan," he said. "Where do you get it? I drink the health of that charming creature in a bumper. Faith, Captain, I don't wonder that the men

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are wild about her. I never saw such eyes in my life, or such a grand manner. I am sure she is as intellectual as she is beautiful, and I have no doubt she's as good as she is clever."

"A good girl, sir—a good girl, sir," said the delighted father; "and I pledge a toast to her with all my heart. Shall I send to the—to the cellar for another pint? It's handy by. No? Well, indeed, sir, ye may say she is a good girl, and the pride and glory of her father, honest old Jack Costigan. The man who gets her will have a jew'l to a wife, sir; and I drink his health, sir, and ye know who I mean, Major."

"I am not surprised at young or old falling in love with her," said the Major, "and frankly must tell you, that though I was very angry with my poor nephew Arthur, when I heard of the boy's passion—now I have seen the lady, I can pardon him any extent of it. By George, I should like to enter for the race myself, if I weren't an old fellow and a poor one."

"And no better man, Major, I'm sure," cried Jack, enraptured. "Your friendship, sir, delights me. Your admiration for my girl brings tears to me eyes—tears, sir—manlee tears—and when she leaves me humble home for your own more splendid mansion, I hope she'll keep a place for her poor old father, poor old Jack Costigan."—The Captain suited the action to the word, and his bloodshot eyes were suffused with water as he addressed the Major.

"Your sentiments do you honour," the other said. "But, Captain Costigan, I can't help smiling at one thing you have just said."

"And what's that, sir?" asked Jack, who was at a too heroic and sentimental pitch to descend from it.

"You were speaking about our splendid mansion—my sister's house, I mean."

"I mane the park and mansion of Arthur Pendennis, Esquire, of Fair Oaks Park, whom I hope to see a Mamber of Parliament for his native town of Clavering, when he is of ege to take that responsible stetion," cried the Captain, with much dignity.

MAJOR PENDENNIS FIGHTS THE DRAGON

The Major smiled as he recognised a shaft out of his own bow. It was he who had set Pen upon the idea of sitting in Parliament for the neighbouring borough, and the poor lad had evidently been bragging on the subject to Costigan and the lady of his affections. "Fairoaks Park, my dear sir!" he said. "Do you know our history? We are of excessively ancient family certainly, but I began life with scarce enough money to purchase my commission, and my eldest brother was a country apothecary, who made every shilling he died possessed of out of his pestle and mortar."

"I have consented to waive that objection, sir," said Costigan majestically, "in consideration of the known respectability of your family."

"Curse your impudence," thought the Major; but he only smiled and bowed.

"The Costigans, too, have met with misfortunes, and our house of Castle Costigan is by no means what it was. I have known very honest men apothecaries, sir, and there's some in Dublin that has had the honour of dining at the Lord-Leftenant's teble."

"You are very kind to give us the benefit of your charity," the Major continued; "but permit me to say that is not the question. You spoke just now of my little nephew as heir of Fairoaks Park, and I don't know what besides."

"Funded property, I've no doubt, Meejor, and something handsome eventually from yourself."

"My good sir, I tell you the boy is the son of a country apothecary," cried out Major Pendennis; "and that when he comes of age he won't have a shilling."

"Pooh, Major, you're laughing at me," said Mr. Costigan; "me young friend, I make no doubt, is heir to two thousand pounds a year."

"Two thousand fiddlesticks! I beg your pardon, my dear sir; but has the boy been humbugging you?—it is not his habit. Upon my word and honour, as a gentleman and an executor to my brother's will too, he left little more than five hundred a year behind him."

"And with aconomy, a handsome sum of money too, sir,"

MAJOR PENDENNIS FIGHTS THE DRAGON

the Captain answered. "Faith, I've known a man drink his claret, and drive his coach and four, on five hundred a year and strict aconomy in Ireland, sir. We'll manage on it, sir—trust Jack Costigan for that."

"My dear Captain Costigan, I give you my word that my brother did not leave a shilling to his son Arthur."

"Are ye joking with me, Meejor Pendennis?" cried Jack Costigan. "Are ye thrifling with the feelings of a father and a gentleman?"

"I am telling you the honest truth," said Major Pendennis. "Every shilling my brother had, he left to his widow—with a partial reversion, it is true, to the boy. But she is a young woman, and may marry if he offends her; or she may outlive him, for she comes of an uncommonly long-lived family. And I ask you, as a gentleman, and a man of the world, what allowance can my sister, Mrs. Pendennis, make to her son out of five hundred a year, which is all her fortune, that shall enable him to maintain himself and your daughter in the rank befitting such an accomplished young lady?"

"Am I to understand, sir, that the young gentleman, your nephew, and whom I have fostered and cherished as the son of me bosom, is an imposther who has been thrifling with the affections of me beloved child?" exclaimed the General, with an outbreak of wrath. "Have you yourself been working upon the feelings of the young man's susceptible nature to injuice him to break off an engagement, and with it me adored Emily's heart? Have a care, sir, how you thrifle with the honour of John Costigan. If I thought any mortal man meant to do so, be heavens I'd have his blood, sir—were he old or young."

"Mr. Costigan!" cried out the Major.

"Mr. Costigan can protect his own and his daughter's honour, and will, sir," said the other. "Look at that chest of dthrawers; it contains heaps of letthers that that viper has addressed to that innocent child. There's promises there, sir, enough to fill a bandbox with; and when I have dragged the scoundthrel before the Courts of Law, and shown up his perjury and his dishonour, I have another

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remedy in yondther mahogany case, sir, which shall set me right, sir, with any individual—ye mark me words, Major Pendennis—with any individual who has counselled your nephew to insult a soldier and a gentleman. What? Me daughter to be jilted, and me grey hairs dishonoured, by an apothecary's son! By the laws of heaven, sir, I should like to see the man that shall do it."

"I am to understand then that you threaten in the first place to publish the letters of a boy of eighteen to a woman of eight-and-twenty; and afterwards to do me the honour of calling me out?" the Major said, still with perfect coolness.

"You have described my intentions with perfect accuracy, Meejor Pendennis," answered the Captain, as he pulled his ragged whiskers over his chin.

"Well, well; these shall be the subjects of future arrangements, but before we come to powder and ball, my good sir—do have the kindness to think with yourself in what earthly way I have injured you. I have told you that my nephew is dependent upon his mother, who has scarcely more than five hundred a year."

"I have my own opinion of the correctness of that assertion," said the Captain.

"Will you go to my sister's lawyers, Messrs. Tatham here, and satisfy yourself?"

"I decline to meet those gentlemen," said the Captain, with rather a disturbed air. "If it be as you say, I have been atrociously deceived by some one, and on that person I'll be revenged."

"Is it my nephew?" cried the Major, starting up and putting on his hat. "Did he ever tell you that his property was two thousand a year? If he did, I'm mistaken in the boy. To tell lies has not been a habit in our family, Mr. Costigan, and I don't think my brother's son has learned it as yet. Try and consider whether you have not deceived yourself, or adopted extravagant reports from hearsay. As for me, sir, you are at liberty to understand that I am not afraid of all the Costigans in Ireland, and know quite well

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how to defend myself against any threats from any quarter. I come here as the boy's guardian to protest against a marriage most absurd and unequal, that cannot but bring poverty and misery with it ; and in preventing it I conceive I am quite as much your daughter's friend (who I have no doubt is an honourable young lady) as the friend of my own family, and prevent the marriage I will, sir, by every means in my power. There, I have said my say, sir."

"But I have not said mine, Major Pendennis ; and ye shall hear more from me," Mr. Costigan said, with a look of tremendous severity.

"'Sdeath, sir, what do you mean ?" the Major asked, turning round on the threshold of the door, and looking the intrepid Costigan in the face.

"Ye said, in the coorse of conversation, that ye were at the George Hotel, I think," Mr. Costigan said, in a stately manner. "A friend shall wait upon ye there before ye leave town, sir."

"Let him make haste, Mr. Costigan," cried out the Major, almost beside himself with rage. "I wish you a good-morning, sir." And Captain Costigan bowed a magnificent bow of defiance to Major Pendennis over the landing-place as the latter retreated down the stairs. . . .

When Miss Costigan came home from rehearsal, which she did in the company of the faithful Mr. Bows, she found her father pacing up and down their apartment in a great state of agitation, and in the midst of a powerful odour of spirits-and-water, which, as it appeared, had not succeeded in pacifying his disordered mind. The Pendennis papers were on the table surrounding the empty goblets and now useless teaspoon, which had served to hold and mix the Captain's liquor and his friend's. As Emily entered he seized her in his arms, and cried out, "Prepare yourself, me child, me blessed child," in a voice of agony, and with eyes brimful of tears.

"Ye're tipsy again, papa," Miss Fotheringay said, pushing back her sire. "Ye promised me ye wouldn't take spirits before dinner."

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"It's to forget me sorrows, me poor girl, that I've taken just a drop," cried the bereaved father—"it's to drown me care that I drain the bowl."

"Your care takes a deal of drowning, Captain dear," said Bows, mimicking his friend's accent; "what has happened? Has that soft-spoken gentleman in the wig been vexing you?"

"The oily miscreant! I'll have his blood!" roared Cos. Miss Milly, it must be premised, had fled to her room out of his embrace, and was taking off her bonnet and shawl there.

"I thought he meant mischief. He was so uncommon civil," the other said. "What has he come to say?"

"O Bows! He has overwhellum'd me," the Captain said. "There's a hellish conspiracy on foot against me poor girl; and it's me opinion that both them Pendennises, nephew and uncle, is two infernal thrators and scoundthrels, who should be conshumed from off the face of the earth."

"What is it? What has happened?" said Mr. Bows, growing rather excited.

Costigan then told him the Major's statement that the young Pendennis had not two thousand, nor two hundred pounds a year; and expressed his fury that he should have permitted such an impostor to coax and wheedle his innocent girl, and that he should have nourished such a viper in his own personal bosom. "I have shaken the reptile from me, however," said Costigan; "and as for his uncle, I'll have such a revenge on that old man, as shall make 'um rue the day he ever insulted a Costigan."

"What do you mean, General?" said Bows.

"I mean to have his life, Bows—his villanous, skulking life, my boy"; and he rapped upon the battered old pistol-case in an ominous and savage manner. Bows had often heard him appeal to that box of death, with which he proposed to sacrifice his enemies; but the Captain did not tell him that he had actually written and sent a challenge to Major Pendennis, and Mr. Bows therefore rather disregarded the pistols in the present instance.

At this juncture Miss Fotheringay returned to the common

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sitting-room from her private apartment, looking perfectly healthy, happy, and unconcerned, a striking and wholesome contrast to her father, who was in a delirious tremor of grief, anger, and other agitation. She brought in a pair of ex-white satin shoes with her, which she proposed to rub as clean as might be with bread-crumbs; intending to go mad with them upon next Tuesday evening in Ophelia, in which character she was to reappear on that night.

She looked at the papers on the table; stopped as if she was going to ask a question, but thought better of it, and going to the cupboard, selected an eligible piece of bread wherewith she might operate on the satin slippers; and afterwards coming back to the table, seated herself there commodiously with the shoes, and then asked her father, in her honest Irish brogue, "What have ye got them letthers, and pothry, and stuff, of Master Arthur's out for, pa? Sure ye don't want to be reading over that nonsense."

"O Emilee!" cried the Captain, "that boy whom I loved as the boy of me bosom is only a scoundthrel and a deceiver, me poor girl"; and he looked in the most tragical way at Mr. Bows opposite, who, in his turn, gazed somewhat anxiously at Miss Costigan.

"He! pooh! Sure the poor lad's as simple as a school-boy," she said. "All them children writes verses and nonsense."

"He's been acting the part of a viper to this fireside, and a traitor in this family," cried the Captain. "I tell ye he's no better than an impostor."

"What has the poor fellow done, papa?" asked Emily.

"Done? He has deceived us in the most atrocious manner," Miss Emily's papa said. "He has thrived with your affections, and outraged my own fine feelings. He has represented himself as a man of property, and it turrns out that he is no better than a beggar. Haven't I often told ye he had two thousand a year? He's a pauper, I tell ye, Miss Costigan; a dependant upon the bountee of his mother—a good woman, who may marry again, who's likely to live for ever, and who has but five hundred a year. How dar

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he ask ye to marry into a family which has not the means of providing for ye? Ye've been grossly deceived and put upon, Milly, and it's my belief his old ruffian of an uncle in the wig is in the plot against us."

"That soft old gentleman? What has he been doing, papa?" continued Emily, still imperturbable.

Costigan informed Milly that when she was gone, Major Pendennis told him, in his double-faced Pall Mall polite manner, that young Arthur had no fortune at all; that the Major had asked him (Costigan) to go to the lawyers ("Wherein he knew the scoundthrels have a bill of mine, and I can't meet them," the Captain parenthetically remarked), and see the lad's father's will; and finally, that an infernal swindle had been practised upon him by the pair, and that he was resolved either on a marriage, or on the blood of both of them.

Milly looked very grave and thoughtful, rubbing the white satin shoe. "Sure, if he's no money, there's no use marrying him, papa," she said sententiously.

"Why did the villain say he was a man of prawpertee?" asked Costigan.

"The poor fellow always said he was poor," answered the girl. "'Twas you would have it he was rich, papa—and made me agree to take him."

"He should have been explicit and told us his income, Milly," answered the father. "A young fellow who rides a blood mare, and makes presents of shawls and bracelets, is an impostor if he has no money; and as for his uncle, bedad I'll pull off his wig whenever I see 'um. Bows, here, shall take a message to him and tell him so. Either it's a marriage, or he meets me in the field like a man, or I tweak 'um on the nose in front of his hotel or in the gravel walks of Fair Oaks Park before all the county, bedad."

"Bedad, you may send somebody else with the message," said Bows, laughing. "I'm a fiddler, not a fighting man, Captain."

"Pooh, you've no spirit, sir," roared the General. "I'll be my own second, if no one will stand by and see me

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injured. And I'll take my case of pistols and shoot 'um in the coffee-room of the George."

"And so poor Arthur has no money?" sighed out Miss Costigan, rather plaintively. "Poor lad, he was a good lad, too: wild and talking nonsense, with his verses and pothry and that, but a brave generous boy; and indeed I liked him—and he liked me too," she added rather softly, and rubbing away at the shoe.

"Why don't you marry him if you like him so?" Mr. Bows said, rather savagely. "He is not more than ten years younger than you are. His mother may relent, and you might go and live and have enough at Fair Oaks Park. Why not go and be a lady? I could go on with the fiddle, and the General live on his half-pay. Why don't you marry him? You know he likes you."

"There's others that likes me as well, Bows, that has no money and that's old enough," Miss Milly said sententiously.

"Yes, d—— it," said Bows, with a bitter curse—"that are old enough and poor enough and fools enough for anything."

"There's old fools, and young fools too. You've often said so, you silly man," the imperious beauty said, with a conscious glance at the old gentleman. "If Pendennis has not enough money to live upon, it's folly to talk about marrying him; and that's the long and short of it."

"And the boy?" said Mr. Bows. "By Jove! you throw a man away like an old glove, Miss Costigan."

"I don't know what you mean, Bows," said Miss Fotheringay placidly, rubbing the second shoe. "If he had had half of the two thousand a year that papa gave him, or the half of that, I would marry him. But what is the good of taking on with a beggar? We're poor enough already. There's no use in my going to live with an old lady that's testy and cross, maybe, and would grudge me every morsel of meat. (Sure, it's near dinner-time, and Suky not laid the cloth yet.) And then," added Miss Costigan quite simply, "suppose there was a family?—why, papa, we shouldn't be as well off as we are now."

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“ ‘Deed then, you would not, Milly dear,” answered the father.

“ And there’s an end to all the fine talk about Mrs. Arthur Pendennis of Fair Oaks Park—the Member of Parliament’s lady,” said Milly, with a laugh. “ Pretty carriages and horses we should have to ride !—that you were always talking about, papa. But it’s always the same. If a man looked at me, you fancied he was going to marry me ; and if he had a good coat, you fancied he was as rich as Crazes.”

“ As Cræsus,” said Mr. Bows.

“ Well, call ’um what ye like. But it’s a fact, now, that papa has married me these eight years a score of times. Wasn’t I to be my Lady Poldoody of Oystherstown Castle ? Then there was the Navy Captain at Portsmouth ; and the old surgeon at Norwich ; and the Methodist preacher here last year, and who knows how many more ? Well, I bet a penny, with all your scheming, I shall die Milly Costigan at last. So poor little Arthur has no money ?—Stop and take dinner, Bows ; we’ve a beautiful beefsteak pudding.”

“ I wonder whether she is on with Sir Derby Oaks,” thought Bows, whose eyes and thoughts were always watching her. “ The dodges of women beat all comprehension ; and I am sure she wouldn’t let the lad off so easily, if she had not some other scheme on hand.”

It will have been perceived that Miss Fotheringay, though silent in general, and by no means brilliant as a conversationist where poetry, literature, or the fine arts were concerned, could talk freely, and with good sense, too, in her own family circle. She cannot justly be called a romantic person, nor were her literary acquirements great—she never opened a Shakespeare from the day she left the stage, nor, indeed, understood it during all the time she adorned the boards—but about a pudding, a piece of needlework, or her own domestic affairs, she was as good a judge as could be found ; and not being misled by a strong imagination or a passionate temper, was better enabled to keep her judgment cool. When, over their dinner, Costigan tried to convince himself and the company that the Major’s statement regard-

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ing Pen's finances was unworthy of credit, and a mere *ruse* upon the old hypocrite's part so as to induce them, on their side, to break off the match, Miss Milly would not, for a moment, admit the possibility of deceit on the side of the adversary, and pointed out clearly that it was her father who had deceived himself, and not poor little Pen who had tried to take them in. As for that poor lad, she said she pitied him with all her heart. And she ate an exceedingly good dinner—to the admiration of Mr. Bows, who had a remarkable regard and contempt for this woman—during and after which repast the party devised upon the best means of bringing this love-matter to a close. As for Costigan, his idea of tweaking the Major's nose vanished with his supply of after-dinner whisky-and-water ; and he was submissive to his daughter, and ready for any plan on which she might decide, in order to meet the crisis which she saw was at hand.

The Captain, who, as long as he had a notion that he was wronged, was eager to face and demolish both Pen and his uncle, perhaps shrank from the idea of meeting the former, and asked, "What the juice they were to say to the lad if he remained steady to his engagement, and they broke from theirs ?"—"What ? don't you know how to throw a man over ?" said Bows ; "ask a woman to tell you" ; and Miss Fotheringay showed how this feat was to be done simply enough—nothing was more easy.—"Papa writes to Arthur to know what settlements he proposes to make in event of a marriage ; and asks what his means are. Arthur writes back and says what he's got, and you'll find it's as the Major says, I'll go bail. Then papa writes, and says it's not enough, and the match had best be at an end."

"And, of course, you enclose a parting line, in which you say you will always regard him as a brother ?" said Mr. Bows, eyeing her in his scornful way.

"Of course, and so I shall," answered Miss Fotheringay. "He's a most worthy young man I'm sure. I'll thank ye hand me the salt. Them filberts is beautiful."

"And there will be no noses pulled, Cos, my boy ? I'm sorry you're balked," said Mr. Bows.

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"'Dad, I suppose not," said Cos, rubbing his own. "What'll ye do about them letters, and verses, and pomes, Milly darling?—Ye must send 'em back."

"Wigsby would give a hundred pound for 'em," Bows said with a sneer.

"'Deed, then, he would," said Captain Costigan, who was easily led.

"Papa!" said Miss Milly. "Ye wouldn't be for not sending the poor boy his letters back? Them letters and pomes is mine. They were very long, and full of all sorts of nonsense, and Latin, and things I couldn't understand the half of—indeed I've not read 'em all—but we'll send 'em back to him when the proper time comes." And going to a drawer, Miss Fotheringay took out from it a number of the *County Chronicle and Chatteris Companion*, in which Pen had written a copy of flaming verses celebrating her appearance in the character of Imogen, and putting by the leaf upon which the poem appeared (for, like ladies of her profession, she kept the favourable printed notices of her performances), she wrapped up Pen's letters, poems, passions, and fancies, and tied them with a piece of string neatly, as she would a parcel of sugar.

Nor was she in the least moved while performing this act. What hours the boy had passed over those papers! What love and longing—what generous faith and manly devotion—what watchful nights and lonely fevers might they tell of! She tied them up like so much grocery, and sate down and made tea afterwards with a perfectly placid and contented heart, while Pen was yearning after her ten miles off, and hugging her image to his soul.

Pendennis.

37...HOW THE PICKWICKIANS DISPORTED
THEMSELVES ON THE ICE

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, with the agreeable items of strong-beer and cherry brandy, had been done ample justice to, "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skate, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye—yes, oh yes," replied Mr. Winkle. "I—I—am *rather* out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swan-like."

"I should be very happy, I'm sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skates."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half a dozen more downstairs; whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller having shovelled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvellous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight, and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive

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satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies ; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions which they called a reel.

All this time, Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone ; "off with you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop !" said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam !"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir !"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made, at the instant, of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These—these—are very awkward skates ; ain't they, Sam ?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's a orkard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come ; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile ; "I'm coming."

"Just a-goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavouring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off !"

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a

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couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily; "you needn't take your hand away to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas-box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There—that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and unswanlike manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank,—

"Sam!"

"Sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a-callin'? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian, and in so doing administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have ensured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the centre of the reel, at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind in skates. He was seated on the ice, making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

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"I wish you'd let me bleed you," said Mr. Benjamin, with great eagerness.

"No, thank you," replied Mr. Winkle, hurriedly.

"I really think you had better," said Allen.

"Thank you," replied Mr. Winkle, "I'd rather not."

"What do *you* think, Mr. Pickwick?" inquired Bob Sawyer.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller and said, in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick, firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces apart from the bystanders, and beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered, in a low but distinct and emphatic tone, these remarkable words,—

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With these words Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavours cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was displaying that beautiful feat of fancy sliding which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a twopenny postman's knock upon it with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

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"It looks a nice, warm exercise that, doesn't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses, and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh, do, please, Mr. Pickwick!" cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I haven't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! Nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterised all his proceedings. "Here; I'll keep you company. Come along!" And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves and put them in his hat; took two or three short runs, balked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a-bilin', sir!" said Sam; and down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony: to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up; to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first, and

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turn slowly round on the slide, with his face towards the point from which he had started ; to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned round when he had done so and ran after his predecessor—his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume his station in the rank with an ardour and enthusiasm that nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp, smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush towards the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared ; the water bubbled up over it ; Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface ; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance ; the males turned pale, and the females fainted ; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand, and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down, with frenzied eagerness ; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming " Fire ! " with all his might.

It was at this very moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, and Mr. Benjamin Allen was holding a hurried consultation with Mr. Bob Sawyer on the advisability of bleeding the company generally, as an improving little bit of professional practice—it was at this very moment that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

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“Keep yourself up for an instant—for only one instant!” bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

“Yes, do; let me implore you—for my sake!” roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary—the probability being that if Mr. Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else’s sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so for his own.

“Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?” said Wardle.

“Yes, certainly,” replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face, and gasping for breath. “I fell upon my back. I couldn’t get on my feet at first.”

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick’s coat as was yet visible bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy’s suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valour were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position, and once more stood on dry land.

“Oh, he’ll catch his death of cold,” said Emily.

“Dear old thing!” said Arabella. “Let me wrap this shawl round you, Mr. Pickwick.”

“Ah, that’s the best thing you can do,” said Wardle; “and when you’ve got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly.”

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller—presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming over the ground, without any clearly-defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm, where Mr. Tupman had arrived some five minutes

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before, and had frightened the old lady into palpitations of the heart by impressing her with the unalterable conviction that the kitchen chimney was on fire—a calamity which always presented itself in glowing colours to the old lady's mind when anybody about her evinced the smallest agitation.

Mr. Pickwick paused not an instant until he was snug in bed. Sam Weller lighted a blazing fire in the room, and took up his dinner ; a bowl of punch was carried up afterwards, and a grand carouse held in honour of his safety. Old Wardle would not hear of his rising, so they made the bed the chair, and Mr. Pickwick presided. A second and a third bowl were ordered in. And when Mr. Pickwick awoke next morning there was not a symptom of rheumatism about him ; which proves, as Mr. Bob Sawyer very justly observed, that there is nothing like hot punch in such cases ; and that if ever hot punch did fail to act as a preventive, it was merely because the patient fell into the vulgar error of not taking enough of it.

The Pickwick Papers.

38...OLIVER TWIST ASKS FOR MORE

THE members of this board were very sage, deep, philosophical men ; and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out at once what ordinary folks would never have discovered—the poor people like it ! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer classes ; a tavern where there was nothing to pay ; a public breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper all the year round ; a brick and mortar elysium, where it was all play and no work. “ Oho ! ” said the board, looking very knowing, “ we are the fellows to set this to rights ; we’ll stop it all, in no time.” So they established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they,) of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. With this view, they contracted with the water-works to lay on an unlimited supply of water ; and with a corn-factor to supply periodically small quantities of oatmeal ; and issued three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays. They made a great many other wise and humane regulations, having reference to the ladies, which it is not necessary to repeat ; kindly undertook to divorce poor married people, in consequence of the great expense of a suit in Doctors’ Commons ; and, instead of compelling a man to support his family, as they had heretofore done, took his family away from him, and made him a bachelor ! There is no saying how many applicants for relief, under these two last heads, might have started up in all classes of society, if it had not been coupled with the workhouse ; but the board were long-headed men, and had provided for this difficulty. The relief was inseparable from the workhouse and the gruel ; and that frightened people.

For the first six months after Oliver Twist was removed

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the system was in full operation. It was rather expensive at first, in consequence of the increase in the undertaker's bill, and the necessity of taking in the clothes of all the paupers, which fluttered loosely on their wasted, shrunken forms, after a week or two's gruel. But the number of workhouse inmates got thin as well as the paupers ; and the board were in ecstasies.

The room in which the boys were fed was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end ; out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at meal-times. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again ; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed ; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon. Boys have generally excellent appetites. Oliver Twist and his companions suffered the tortures of slow starvation for three months. At last they got so voracious and wild with hunger, that one boy who was tall for his age, and hadn't been used to that sort of thing (for his father had kept a small cook's shop), hinted darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel *per diem*, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age. He had a wild hungry eye ; and they implicitly believed him. A council was held ; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening and ask for more ; and it fell to Oliver Twist.

The evening arrived, the boys took their places. The master, in his cook's uniform, stationed himself at the copper ; his pauper assistants ranged themselves behind him ; the gruel was served out ; and a long grace was said

OLIVER TWIST ASKS FOR MORE

over the short commons. The gruel disappeared ; the boys whispered to each other, and winked at Oliver ; while his next neighbours nudged him. Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table ; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said, somewhat alarmed at his own temerity,—

“ Please, sir, I want some more.”

The master was a fat healthy man ; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds ; and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralyzed with wonder, the boys with fear.

“ What ! ” said the master at length, in a faint voice.

“ Please, sir,” replied Oliver, “ I want some more.”

The master aimed a blow at Oliver’s head with the ladle, pinioned him in his arms, and shrieked aloud for the beadle.

The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said,—

“ Mr. Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir ! Oliver Twist has asked for more.”

There was a general start. Horror was depicted on every countenance.

“ For *more* ! ” said Mr. Limbkins. “ Compose yourself, Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more, after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary ? ”

“ He did, sir,” replied Bumble.

“ That boy will be hung,” said the gentleman in the white waistcoat. “ I know that boy will be hung.”

Nobody controverted the prophetic gentleman’s opinion. An animated discussion took place. Oliver was ordered into instant confinement ; and a bill was next morning pasted on the outside of the gate, offering a reward of five pounds to anybody who would take Oliver Twist off the hands of the parish. In other words, five pounds and Oliver Twist were offered to any man or woman who wanted an apprentice to any trade, business, or calling.

Oliver Twist.

39...DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS

WHILE these acts and deeds were in progress in and out of the office of Sampson Brass, Richard Swiveller, being often left alone therein, began to find the time hang heavy on his hands. For the better preservation of his cheerfulness therefore, and to prevent his faculties from rusting, he provided himself with a cribbage-board and pack of cards, and accustomed himself to play at cribbage with a dummy, for twenty, thirty, or sometimes even fifty thousand pounds a side, besides many hazardous bets to a considerable amount.

As these games were very silently conducted, notwithstanding the magnitude of the interests involved, Mr. Swiveller began to think that on those evenings when Mr. and Miss Brass were out (and they often went out now) he heard a kind of snorting or hard-breathing sound in the direction of the door, which it occurred to him, after some reflection, must proceed from the small servant, who always had a cold from damp living. Looking intently that way one night, he plainly distinguished an eye gleaming and glistening at the key-hole ; and having now no doubt that his suspicions were correct, he stole softly to the door, and pounced upon her before she was aware of his approach.

“ Oh ! I didn’t mean any harm indeed. Upon my word I didn’t,” cried the small servant, struggling like a much larger one. “ It’s so very dull, down stairs. Please don’t you tell upon me ; please don’t.”

“ Tell upon you ! ” said Dick. “ Do you mean to say you were looking through the key-hole for company ? ”

“ Yes, upon my word I was,” replied the small servant.

“ How long have you been cooling your eye there ? ” said Dick.

DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS

"Oh ever since you first began to play them cards, and long before."

Vague recollections of several fantastic exercises with which he had refreshed himself after the fatigues of business, and to all of which, no doubt, the small servant was a party, rather disconcerted Mr. Swiveller; but he was not very sensitive on such points, and recovered himself speedily.

"Well,—come in," he said, after a little consideration. "Here—sit down, and I'll teach you how to play."

"Oh! I durstn't do it," rejoined the small servant; "Miss Sally 'ud kill me, if she know'd I came up here."

"Have you got a fire down stairs?" said Dick.

"A very little one," replied the small servant.

"Miss Sally couldn't kill me if she know'd I went down there, so I'll come," said Richard, putting the cards into his pocket. "Why, how thin you are! What do you mean by it?"

"It an't my fault."

"Could you eat any bread and meat?" said Dick, taking down his hat. "Yes? Ah! I thought so. Did you ever taste beer?"

"I had a sip of it once," said the small servant.

"Here's a state of things!" cried Mr. Swiveller, raising his eye to the ceiling. "She *never* tasted it—it can't be tasted in a sip! Why, how old are you?"

"I don't know."

Mr. Swiveller opened his eyes very wide, and appeared thoughtful for a moment; then, bidding the child mind the door until he came back, vanished straightway.

Presently he returned, followed by the boy from the public-house, who bore in one hand a plate of bread and beef, and in the other a great pot, filled with some very fragrant compound, which sent forth a grateful steam, and was indeed choice purl, made after a particular recipe which Mr. Swiveller had imparted to the landlord at a period when he was deep in his books and desirous to conciliate his friendship. Relieving the boy of his burden at the door,

DICK SWIVELLER AND THE MARCHIONESS

and charging his little companion to fasten it to prevent surprise, Mr. Swiveller followed her into the kitchen.

"There!" said Richard, putting the plate before her. "First of all, clear that off, and then you'll see what's next."

The small servant needed no second bidding, and the plate was soon empty.

"Next," said Dick, handing the purl, "take a pull at that; but moderate your transports, you know, for you're not used to it. Well, is it good?"

"Oh! isn't it?" said the small servant.

Mr. Swiveller appeared gratified beyond all expression by this reply, and took a long draught himself, steadfastly regarding his companion while he did so. These preliminaries disposed of, he applied himself to teaching her the game, which she soon learnt tolerably well, being both sharp-witted and cunning.

"Now," said Mr. Swiveller, putting two sixpences into a saucer, and trimming the wretched candle, when the cards had been cut and dealt, "those are the stakes. If you win, you get 'em all. If I win, I get 'em. To make it seem more real and pleasant, I shall call you the Marchioness, do you hear?"

The small servant nodded.

"Then, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "fire away!"

The Marchioness, holding her cards very tight in both hands, considered which to play, and Mr. Swiveller, assuming the gay and fashionable air which such society required, took another pull at the tankard, and waited for her lead.

Mr. Swiveller and his partner played several rubbers with varying success, until the loss of three sixpences, the gradual sinking of the purl, and the striking of ten o'clock, combined to render that gentleman mindful of the flight of Time, and the expediency of withdrawing before Mr. Sampson and Miss Sally Brass returned.

"With which object in view, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller gravely, "I shall ask your ladyship's permission to put the board in my pocket, and to retire from the presence when I have finished this tankard; merely observing,

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Marchioness, that since life like a river is flowing, I care not how fast it rolls on, ma'am, on, while such purl on the bank still is growing, and such eyes light the waves as they run. Marchioness, your health. You will excuse my wearing my hat, but the palace is damp, and the marble floor is—if I may be allowed the expression—sloppy."

As a precaution against this latter inconvenience, Mr. Swiveller had been sitting for some time with his feet on the hob, in which attitude he now gave utterance to these apologetic observations, and slowly sipped the last choice drops of nectar.

"The Baron Sampson Brasso and his fair sister are (you tell me) at the Play?" said Mr. Swiveller, leaning his left arm heavily upon the table, and raising his voice and his right leg after the manner of a theatrical bandit.

The Marchioness nodded.

"Ha!" said Mr. Swiveller, with a portentous frown. "'Tis well. Marchioness!—but no matter. Some wine there. Ho!" He illustrated these melodramatic morsels by handing the tankard to himself with great humility, receiving it haughtily, drinking from it thirstily, and smacking his lips fiercely.

The small servant, who was not so well acquainted with theatrical conventionalities as Mr. Swiveller (having indeed never seen a play, or heard one spoken of, except by chance through chinks of doors and in other forbidden places), was rather alarmed by demonstrations so novel in their nature, and showed her concern so plainly in her looks, that Mr. Swiveller felt it necessary to discharge his brigand manner for one more suitable to private life, as he asked,

"Do they often go where glory waits 'em, and leave you here?"

"Oh, yes; I believe you they do," returned the small servant. "Miss Sally's such a one-er for that, she is."

"Such a what?" said Dick.

"Such a one-er," returned the Marchioness.

After a moment's reflection, Mr. Swiveller determined to forego his responsible duty of setting her right, and to suffer

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her to talk on ; as it was evident that her tongue was loosened by the purl, and her opportunities for conversation were not so frequent as to render a momentary check of little consequence.

"They sometimes go to see Mr. Quilp," said the small servant with a shrewd look ; "they go to a many places, bless you."

"Is Mr. Brass a wunner ?" said Dick.

"Not half what Miss Sally is, he isn't," replied the small servant, shaking her head. "Bless you, he'd never do anything without her."

"Oh ! He wouldn't, wouldn't he ?" said Dick.

"Miss Sally keeps him in such order," said the small servant ; "he always asks her advice, he does ; and he catches it sometimes. Bless you, you wouldn't believe how much he catches it."

"I suppose," said Dick, "they consult together a good deal, and talk about a great many people—about me, for instance, sometimes, eh, Marchioness ?"

The Marchioness nodded amazingly.

"Complimentary ?" said Mr. Swiveller.

The Marchioness changed the motion of her head, which had not yet left off nodding, and suddenly began to shake it from side to side with a vehemence which threatened to dislocate her neck.

"Humph !" Dick muttered. "Would it be any breach of confidence, Marchioness, to relate what they say of the humble individual who has now the honour to—— ?"

"Miss Sally says you're a funny chap," replied his friend.

"Well, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, "that's not uncomplimentary. Merriment, Marchioness, is not a bad or degrading quality. Old King Cole was himself a merry old soul, if we may put any faith in the pages of history."

"But she says," pursued his companion, "that you an't to be trusted."

"Why, really, Marchioness," said Mr. Swiveller, thoughtfully ; "several ladies and gentlemen—not exactly professional persons, but tradespeople, ma'am, tradespeople—

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have made the same remark. The obscure citizen who keeps the hotel over the way, inclined strongly to that opinion to-night when I ordered him to prepare the banquet. It's a popular prejudice, Marchioness ; and yet I am sure I don't know why, for I have been trusted in my time to a considerable amount, and I can safely say that I never forsook my trust until it deserted me—never. Mr. Brass is of the same opinion, I suppose ? ”

His friend nodded again, with a cunning look which seemed to hint that Mr. Brass held stronger opinions on the subject than his sister ; and seeming to recollect herself, added imploringly, “ But don't you ever tell upon me, or I shall be beat to death.”

“ Marchioness,” said Mr. Swiveller, rising, “ the word of a gentleman is as good as his bond—sometimes better ; as in the present case, where his bond might prove but a doubtful sort of security. I am your friend, and I hope we shall play many more rubbers together in this same saloon. But, Marchioness,” added Richard, stopping in his way to the door, and wheeling slowly round upon the small servant, who was following with the candle ; “ it occurs to me that you must be in the constant habit of airing your eye at key-holes to know all this.”

“ I only wanted,” replied the trembling Marchioness, “ to know where the key of the safe was hid ; that was all ; and I wouldn't have taken much, if I had found it—only enough to squench my hunger.”

“ You didn't find it then ? ” said Dick. “ But of course you didn't or you would be plumper. Good night, Marchioness. Fare thee well, and if for ever, then for ever fare thee well—and put up the chain, Marchioness, in case of accidents.”

With this parting injunction, Mr. Swiveller emerged from the house.

The Old Curiosity Shop.

40...MRS. GAMP

HAVING always been an early riser, and having now no organ to engage him in sweet converse every morning, it was Tom Pinch's habit to take a long walk before going to the Temple ; and naturally inclining, as a stranger, towards those parts of the town which were conspicuous for the life and animation pervading them, he became a great frequenter of the market-places, bridges, quays, and especially the steamboat wharves : for it was very lively and fresh to see the people hurrying away upon their many schemes of business or pleasure, and it made Tom glad to think that there was that much change and freedom in the monotonous routine of city lives.

In most of these morning excursions Ruth accompanied him. . . . Many a pleasant stroll they had among the cool, refreshing, silvery fish-stalls, with a kind of moonlight effect about their stock-in-trade, excepting always for the ruddy lobsters. Many a pleasant stroll among the wagon-loads of fragrant hay, beneath which dogs and tired wagoners lay fast asleep, oblivious of the pieman and the public-house. But never half so good a stroll as down among the steamboats on a bright morning.

There they lay, alongside of each other—hard and fast for ever to all appearance, but designing to get out somehow, and quite confident of doing it ; and in that faith shoals of passengers and heaps of luggage were proceeding hurriedly on board. Little steamboats dashed up and down the stream incessantly. Tiers upon tiers of vessels, scores of masts, labyrinths of tackle, idle sails, splashing oars, gliding row-boats, lumbering barges, sunken piles, with ugly lodgings for the water-rat within their mud discoloured nooks ; church steeples, warehouses, house roofs, arches, bridges, men and women, children, casks, cranes, boxes, horses,

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coaches, idlers, and hard labourers—there they were, all jumbled up together, any summer morning. . . .

Tom's ship, however—or at least the packet-boat in which Tom and his sister took the greatest interest on one particular occasion—was not off yet by any means, but was at the height of its disorder. The press of passengers was very great ; another steamboat lay on each side of her ; the gangways were choked up ; distracted women, obviously bound for Gravesend, but turning a deaf ear to all representations that this particular vessel was about to sail for Antwerp, persisted in secreting baskets of refreshments behind bulkheads and water-casks, and under seats ; and very great confusion prevailed.

It was so amusing that Tom, with Ruth upon his arm, stood looking down from the wharf, as nearly regardless as it was in the nature of flesh and blood to be of an elderly lady behind him, who had brought a large umbrella with her, and didn't know what to do with it. This tremendous instrument had a hooked handle, and its vicinity was first made known to him by a painful pressure on the windpipe, consequent upon its having caught him round the throat. Soon after disengaging himself, with perfect good humour, he had a sensation of the ferrule at his back ; immediately afterwards of the hook entangling his ankles ; then of the umbrella generally wandering about his hat, and flapping at it like a great bird ; and, lastly, of a poke or thrust below the ribs, which gave him such exceeding anguish that he could not refrain from turning round to offer a mild remonstrance.

Upon his turning round, he found the owner of the umbrella struggling on tiptoe, with a countenance expressive of violent animosity, to look down upon the steamboats ; from which he inferred that she had attacked him, standing in the front row, by design, as her natural enemy.

“ What a very ill-natured person you must be ! ” said Tom.

The lady cried out fiercely, “ Where's the pelisse ? ”—meaning the constabulary—and went on to say, shaking the handle of the umbrella at Tom, that but for them fellers

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never being in the way when they was wanted, she'd have given him in charge, she would.

"If they greased their whiskers less, and minded the duties which they're paid so heavy for a little more," she observed, "no one needn't be drove mad by scrouding so!"

She had been grievously knocked about, no doubt, for her bonnet was bent into the shape of a cocked hat. Being a fat little woman, too, she was in a state of great exhaustion and intense heat. Instead of pursuing the altercation therefore, Tom civilly inquired what boat she wanted to go on board of.

"I suppose," returned the lady, "as nobody but yourself can want to look at a steam package without wanting to go a-boarding of it, can they? Booby!"

"Which one do you want to look at, then?" said Tom. "We'll make room for you if we can. Don't be so ill-tempered."

"No blessed creetur as ever I was with in trying times," returned the lady, somewhat softened, "and they're many in their numbers, ever brought it as a charge again myself that I was anythin' but mild and equal in my spirits. Never mind a-contradicting of me, if you seems to feel it does you good, ma'am, I often says, for well you know that Sairey may be trusted not to give it back again. But I will not denige that I am worrited and wexed this day, and with good reagon, Lord forbid!"

By this time Mrs. Gamp (for it was no other than that experienced practitioner) had, with Tom's assistance, squeezed and worked herself into a small corner between Ruth and the rail, where, after breathing very hard for some little time, and performing a short series of dangerous evolutions with the umbrella, she managed to establish herself pretty comfortably.

"And which of all them smoking monsters is the Ankworks boat, I wonder. Goodness me!" cried Mrs. Gamp.

"What boat did you want?" asked Ruth.

"The Ankworks package," Mrs. Gamp replied. "I will not deceive you, my sweet; why should I?"

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“ That is the Antwerp packet in the middle,” said Ruth.

“ And I wish it was in Jonadge’s belly, I do,” cried Mrs. Gamp, appearing to confound the prophet with the whale in this miraculous aspiration.

Ruth said nothing in reply ; but as Mrs. Gamp, laying her chin against the cool iron of the rail, continued to look intently at the Antwerp boat, and every now and then to give a little groan, she inquired whether any child of hers was going abroad that morning. Or perhaps her husband, she said kindly.

“ Which shows,” said Mrs. Gamp, casting up her eyes, “ what a little way you’ve travelled in this wale of life, my dear young creetur ! As a good friend of mine has frequent made remark to me, which her name, my love, is Harris—Mrs. Harris through the square and up the steps a-turnin’ round by the tobacker shop—‘ O Sairey, Sairey, little do we know what lays afore us ! ’ ‘ Mrs. Harris, ma’am,’ I says, ‘ not much, it’s true, but more than you suppose. Our calcilations, ma’am,’ I says, ‘ respectin’ wot the number of a family will be comes most times within one, and oftener than you would suppose exact.’ ‘ Sairey,’ says Mrs. Harris, in a awful way, ‘ tell me wot is my indiwiggle number.’ ‘ No, Mrs. Harris,’ I says to her, ‘ ex-cuge me, if you please. My own,’ I says, ‘ has fallen out of three-pair backs, and had damp doorsteps settled on their lungs, and one was turned up smilin’ in a bedstead unbeknown. Therefore, ma’am,’ I says, ‘ seek not to proticipate, but take ’em as they come and as they go.’ Mine,” said Mrs. Gamp—“ mine is all gone, my dear young chick. And as to husbands, there’s a wooden leg gone likeways home to its account, which in its constancy of walkin’ into wine vaults, and never comin’ out again till fetched by force, was quite as weak as flesh, if not weaker.”

When she had delivered this oration, Mrs. Gamp leaned her chin upon the cool iron again ; and looking intently at the Antwerp packet, shook her head and groaned.

Martin Chuzzlewit.

41...DAVID COPPERFIELD AT THE MICAWBERS'

THE counting-house clock was at half-past twelve, and there was general preparation for going to dinner, when Mr. Quinion tapped at the counting-house window, and beckoned to me to go in. I went in, and found there a stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair upon his head (which was a large one and very shining) than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face, which he turned full upon me. His clothes were shabby, but he had an imposing shirt-collar on. He carried a jaunty sort of stick, with a large pair of rusty tassels to it ; and a quizzing-glass hung outside his coat,—for ornament, I afterwards found, as he very seldom looked through it, and couldn't see anything when he did.

"This," said Mr. Quinion, in allusion to myself, "is he."

"This," said the stranger, with a certain condescending roll in his voice, and a certain indescribable air of doing something genteel, which impressed me very much, "is Master Copperfield. I hope I see you well, sir ?"

I said I was very well, and hoped he was. I was sufficiently ill at ease, Heaven knows ; but it was not in my nature to complain much at that time of my life, so I said I was very well, and hoped he was.

"I am," said the stranger, "thank Heaven, quite well. I have received a letter from Mr. Murdstone, in which he mentions that he would desire me to receive into an apartment in the rear of my house, which is at present unoccupied—and is, in short, to be let as a—in short," said the stranger, with a smile, and in a burst of confidence, "as a bedroom—the young beginner whom I have now the pleasure to——" and the stranger waved his hand, and settled his chin in his shirt-collar.

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"This is Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion to me.

"Ahem!" said the stranger, "that is my name."

"Mr. Micawber," said Mr. Quinion, "is known to Mr. Murdstone. He takes orders for us on commission, when he can get any. He has been written to by Mr. Murdstone, on the subject of your lodgings, and he will receive you as a lodger."

"My address," said Mr. Micawber, "is Windsor Terrace, City Road. I—in short," said Mr. Micawber, with the same genteel air, and in another burst of confidence—"I live there."

I made him a bow.

"Under the impression," said Mr. Micawber, "that your peregrinations in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the arcana of the Modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road—in short," said Mr. Micawber, in another burst of confidence, "that you might lose yourself—I shall be happy to call this evening, and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way."

I thanked him with all my heart, for it was friendly in him to offer to take that trouble.

"At what hour," said Mr. Micawber, "shall I——"

"At about eight," said Mr. Quinion.

"At about eight," said Mr. Micawber. "I beg to wish you good day, Mr. Quinion. I will intrude no longer."

So he put on his hat, and went out with his cane under his arm: very upright, and humming a tune when he was clear of the counting-house.

Mr. Quinion then formally engaged me to be as useful as I could in the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first and seven afterwards. He paid me a week down (from his own pocket, I believe), and I gave Mealy sixpence out of it to get my trunk carried to Windsor Terrace that night: it being too heavy for my strength, small as it was. I paid sixpence more for

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my dinner, which was a meat pie and a turn at a neighbouring pump ; and passed the hour which was allowed for that meal, in walking about the streets.

At the appointed time in the evening, Mr. Micawber reappeared. I washed my hands and face, to do the greater honour to his gentility, and we walked to our house, as I suppose I must now call it, together ; Mr. Micawber impressing the names of streets, and the shapes of corner houses upon me, as we went along, that I might find my way back easily, in the morning.

Arrived at his house in Windsor Terrace (which I noticed was shabby like himself, but also, like himself, made all the show it could), he presented me to Mrs. Micawber, a thin and faded lady, not at all young, who was sitting in the parlour (the first floor was altogether unfurnished, and the blinds were kept down to delude the neighbours), with a baby at her breast. This baby was one of twins ; and I may remark here that I hardly ever, in all my experience of the family, saw both the twins detached from Mrs. Micawber at the same time. One of them was always taking refreshment.

There were two other children ; Master Micawber, aged about four, and Miss Micawber, aged about three. These, and a dark-complexioned young woman, with a habit of snorting, who was servant to the family, and informed me, before half-an-hour had expired, that she was " a Orfling," and came from St. Luke's workhouse, in the neighbourhood, completed the establishment. My room was at the top of the house, at the back : a close chamber ; stencilled all over with an ornament which my young imagination represented as a blue muffin ; and very scantily furnished.

" I never thought," said Mrs. Micawber, when she came up, twin and all, to show me the apartment, and sat down to take breath, " before I was married, when I lived with papa and mama, that I should ever find it necessary to take a lodger. But Mr. Micawber being in difficulties, all considerations of private feeling must give way."

I said : " Yes, ma'am."

" Mr. Micawber's difficulties are almost overwhelming

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just at present," said Mrs. Micawber ; " and whether it is possible to bring him through them, I don't know. When I lived at home with papa and mama, I really should have hardly understood what the word meant, in the sense in which I now employ it, but *experientia* does it—as papa used to say."

I cannot satisfy myself whether she told me that Mr. Micawber had been an officer in the Marines, or whether I have imagined it. I only know that I believe to this hour that he *was* in the Marines once upon a time, without knowing why. He was a sort of town traveller for a number of miscellaneous houses, now ; but made little or nothing of it, I am afraid.

" If Mr. Micawber's creditors *will not* give him time," said Mrs. Micawber, " they must take the consequences ; and the sooner they bring it to an issue the better. Blood cannot be obtained from a stone, neither can anything on account be obtained at present (not to mention law expenses) from Mr. Micawber."

I never can quite understand whether my precocious self-dependence confused Mrs. Micawber in reference to my age, or whether she was so full of the subject that she would have talked about it to the very twins if there had been nobody else to communicate with, but this was the strain in which she began, and she went on accordingly all the time I knew her.

Poor Mrs. Micawber ! She said she had tried to exert herself ; and so, I have no doubt, she had. The centre of the street-door was perfectly covered with a great brass-plate, on which was engraved " Mrs. Micawber's Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies " : but I never found that any young lady had ever been to school there ; or that any young lady ever came, or proposed to come ; or that the least preparation was ever made to receive any young lady. The only visitors I ever saw or heard of, were creditors. *They* used to come at all hours, and some of them were quite ferocious. One dirty-faced man, I think he was a boot-maker, used to edge himself into the passage as early as

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seven o'clock in the morning, and call up the stairs to Mr. Micawber—"Come! You ain't out yet, you know. Pay us, will you? Don't hide, you know; that's mean. I wouldn't be mean if I was you. Pay us, will you? You just pay us, d'ye hear? Come!" Receiving no answer to these taunts, he would mount in his wrath to the words "swindlers" and "robbers"; and these being ineffectual too, would sometimes go to the extremity of crossing the street, and roaring up at the windows of the second floor, where he knew Mr. Micawber was. At these times Mr. Micawber would be transported with grief and mortification, even to the length (as I was once made aware by a scream from his wife) of making motions at himself with a razor; but within half-an-hour afterwards, he would polish up his shoes with extraordinary pains, and go out, humming a tune with a greater air of gentility than ever. Mrs. Micawber was quite as elastic. I have known her to be thrown into fainting fits by the king's taxes at three o'clock, and to eat lamb-chops breaded, and drink warm ale (paid for with two tea-spoons that had gone to the pawnbroker's) at four. On one occasion, when an execution had just been put in, coming home through some chance as early as six o'clock, I saw her lying (of course with a twin) under the grate in a swoon, with her hair all torn about her face; but I never knew her more cheerful than she was, that very same night, over a veal-cutlet before the kitchen fire, telling me stories about her papa and mama, and the company they used to keep.

David Copperfield.

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MAGGIE had thrown her bonnet off very carelessly, and, coming in with her hair rough as well as out of curl, rushed at once to Lucy, who was standing by her mother's knee. Certainly the contrast between the cousins was conspicuous, and, to superficial eyes, was very much to the disadvantage of Maggie, though a connoisseur might have seen "points" in her which had a higher promise for maturity than Lucy's natty completeness. It was like the contrast between a rough, dark, overgrown puppy and a white kitten. Lucy put up the neatest little rosebud mouth to be kissed. Everything about her was neat—her little round neck, with the row of coral beads; her little straight nose, not at all snubby; her little clear eyebrows, rather darker than her curls, to match her hazel eyes, which looked up with shy pleasure at Maggie, taller by the head, though scarcely a year older. Maggie always looked at Lucy with delight. She was fond of fancying a world where the people never got any larger than children of their own age, and she made the queen of it just like Lucy, with a little crown on her head and a little sceptre in her hand—only the queen was Maggie herself in Lucy's form.

"O Lucy," she burst out, after kissing her, "you'll stay with Tom and me, won't you?—Oh, kiss her, Tom."

Tom, too, had come up to Lucy, but he was not going to kiss her—no; he came up to her with Maggie because it seemed easier, on the whole, than saying, "How do you do?" to all those aunts and uncles. He stood looking at nothing in particular, with the blushing awkward air and semi-smile which are common to shy boys when in company—very much as if they had come into the world by mistake, and found it in a degree of undress that was quite embarrassing.

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"Heyday!" said aunt Glegg, with loud emphasis. "Do little boys and gells come into a room without taking notice o' their uncles and aunts? That wasn't the way when *I* was a little gell."

"Go and speak to your aunts and uncles, my dears," said Mrs. Tulliver, looking anxious and melancholy. She wanted to whisper to Maggie a command to go and have her hair brushed.

"Well, and how do you do? And I hope you're good children, are you?" said aunt Glegg, in the same loud emphatic way, as she took their hands, hurting them with her large rings, and kissing their cheeks much against their desire. "Look up, Tom, look up. Boys as go to boarding-schools should hold their heads up. Look at me now." Tom declined that pleasure apparently, for he tried to draw his hand away. "Put your hair behind your ears, Maggie, and keep your frock on your shoulder."

Aunt Glegg always spoke to them in this loud emphatic way, as if she considered them deaf, or perhaps rather idiotic. It was a means, she thought, of making them feel that they were accountable creatures, and might be a salutary check on naughty tendencies. Bessy's children were so spoiled, they'd need have somebody to make them feel their duty.

"Well, my dears," said aunt Pullet, in a compassionate voice, "you grow wonderful fast.—I doubt they'll outgrow their strength," she added, looking over their heads, with a melancholy expression, at their mother. "I think the gell has too much hair. I'd have it thinned and cut shorter, sister, if I was you. It isn't good for her health. It's that as makes her skin so brown, I shouldn't wonder.—Don't you think so, sister Deane?"

"I can't say, I'm sure, sister," said Mrs. Deane, shutting her lips close again, and looking at Maggie with a critical eye.

"No, no," said Mr. Tulliver, "the child's healthy enough—there's nothing ails her. There's red wheat as well as white, for that matter, and some like the dark grain best.

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But it 'ud be as well if Bessy 'ud have the child's hair cut, so as it 'ud lie smooth."

A dreadful resolve was gathering in Maggie's breast, but it was arrested by the desire to know from her aunt Deane whether she would leave Lucy behind. Aunt Deane would hardly ever let Lucy come to see them. After various reasons for refusal, Mrs. Deane appealed to Lucy herself.

"You wouldn't like to stay behind without mother, should you, Lucy?"

"Yes, please, mother," said Lucy timidly, blushing very pink all over her little neck.

"Well done, Lucy!—Let her stay, Mrs. Deane, let her stay," said Mr. Deane, a large but alert-looking man, with a type of physique to be seen in all ranks of English society—bald crown, red whiskers, full forehead, and general solidity without heaviness. You may see noblemen like Mr. Deane, and you may see grocers or day-labourers like him; but the keenness of his brown eyes was less common than his contour. He held a silver snuff-box very tightly in his hand, and now and then exchanged a pinch with Mr. Tulliver, whose box was only silver-mounted, so that it was naturally a joke between them that Mr. Tulliver wanted to exchange snuff-boxes also. Mr. Deane's box had been given him by the superior partners in the firm to which he belonged, at the same time that they gave him a share in the business, in acknowledgment of his valuable services as manager. No man was thought more highly of in St. Ogg's than Mr. Deane, and some persons were even of opinion that Miss Susan Dodson, who was held to have made the worst match of all the Dodson sisters, might one day ride in a better carriage, and live in a better house, even than her sister Pullet. There was no knowing where a man would stop, who had got his foot into a great mill-owning, ship-owning business like that of Guest and Co., with a banking concern attached. And Mrs. Deane, as her intimate female friends observed, was proud and "having" enough. *She* wouldn't let her husband stand still in the world for want of spurring.

"Maggie," said Mrs. Tulliver, beckoning Maggie to her,

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and whispering in her ear, as soon as this point of Lucy's staying was settled, "go and get your hair brushed—do, for shame. I told you not to come in without going to Martha first ; you know I did."

"Tom, come out with me," whispered Maggie, pulling his sleeve as she passed him ; and Tom followed willingly enough.

"Come upstairs with me, Tom," she whispered when they were outside the door. "There's something I want to do before dinner."

"There's no time to play at anything before dinner," said Tom, whose imagination was impatient of any intermediate prospect.

"Oh yes, there is time for this ; *do* come, Tom."

Tom followed Maggie upstairs into her mother's room, and saw her go at once to a drawer, from which she took out a large pair of scissors.

"What are they for, Maggie ?" said Tom, feeling his curiosity awakened.

Maggie answered by seizing her front locks and cutting them straight across the middle of her forehead.

"Oh, my buttons, Maggie, you'll catch it !" exclaimed Tom ; "you'd better not cut any more off."

Snip went the great scissors again while Tom was speaking ; and he couldn't help feeling it was rather good fun—Maggie would look so queer.

"Here, Tom, cut it behind for me," said Maggie, excited by her own daring, and anxious to finish the deed.

"You'll catch it, you know," said Tom, nodding his head in an admonitory manner, and hesitating a little as he took the scissors.

"Never mind ; make haste !" said Maggie, giving a little stamp with her foot. Her cheeks were quite flushed.

The black locks were so thick, nothing could be more tempting to a lad who had already tasted the forbidden pleasure of cutting the pony's mane. I speak to those who know the satisfaction of making a pair of shears meet through a duly resisting mass of hair. One delicious grinding snip,

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and then another and another, and the hinder locks fell heavily on the floor, and Maggie stood cropped in a jagged, uneven manner, but with a sense of clearness and freedom, as if she had emerged from a wood into the open plain.

“O Maggie!” said Tom, jumping round her, and slapping his knees as he laughed—“oh, my buttons, what a queer thing you look! Look at yourself in the glass; you look like the idiot we throw our nutshells to at school.”

Maggie felt an unexpected pang. She had thought beforehand chiefly of her own deliverance from her teasing hair and teasing remarks about it, and something also of the triumph she should have over her mother and her aunts by this very decided course of action. She didn’t want her hair to look pretty—that was out of the question; she only wanted people to think her a clever little girl, and not to find fault with her. But now, when Tom began to laugh at her, and say she was like the idiot, the affair had quite a new aspect. She looked in the glass, and still Tom laughed and clapped his hands, and Maggie’s flushed cheeks began to pale, and her lips to tremble a little.

“O Maggie, you’ll have to go down to dinner directly,” said Tom. “Oh my!”

“Don’t laugh at me, Tom,” said Maggie, in a passionate tone, with an outburst of angry tears, stamping, and giving him a push.

“Now, then, spitfire!” said Tom, “What did you cut it off for, then? I shall go down; I can smell the dinner going in.”

He hurried downstairs and left poor Maggie to that bitter sense of the irrevocable which was almost an everyday experience of her small soul. She could see clearly enough, now the thing was done, that it was very foolish, and that she should have to hear and think more about her hair than ever; for Maggie rushed to her deeds with passionate impulse, and then she saw not only their consequences, but what would have happened if they had not been done, with all the detail and exaggerated circumstance of an active imagination. . . .

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"Miss Maggie, you're to come down this minute," said Kezia, entering the room hurriedly. "Lawks! what have you been a-doing? I niver *see* such a fright."

"Don't, Kezia," said Maggie angrily. "Go away!"

"But I tell you, you're to come down, miss, this minute; your mother says so," said Kezia, going up to Maggie and taking her by the hand to raise her from the floor.

"Get away, Kezia; I don't want any dinner," said Maggie, resisting Kezia's arm. "I shan't come."

"Oh, well, I can't stay. I've got to wait at dinner," said Kezia, going out again.

"Maggie, you little silly," said Tom, peeping into the room ten minutes after, "why don't you come and have your dinner? There's lots o' goodies, and mother says you're to come. What are you crying for, you little spooney?"

Oh, it was dreadful! Tom was so hard and unconcerned. If *he* had been crying on the floor, Maggie would have cried too. And there was the dinner, so nice, and she was so hungry. It was very bitter.

But Tom was not altogether hard. He was not inclined to cry, and did not feel that Maggie's grief spoiled his prospect of the sweets; but he went and put his head near her, and said in a lower, comforting tone,—

"Won't you come, then, Magsie? Shall I bring you a bit o'pudding when I've had mine, and a custard and things?"

"Ye—e—es," said Maggie, beginning to feel life a little more tolerable.

"Very well," said Tom, going away. But he turned again at the door and said, "But you'd better come, you know. There's the dessert—nuts, you know, and cowslip wine."

Maggie's tears had ceased, and she looked reflective as Tom left her. His good-nature had taken off the keenest edge of her suffering, and nuts with cowslip wine began to assert their legitimate influence.

Slowly she rose from amongst her scattered locks, and slowly she made her way downstairs. Then she stood leaning with one shoulder against the frame of the dining-parlour door, peeping in when it was ajar. She saw Tom and Lucy with an empty chair between them, and there

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were the custards on a side-table. It was too much. She slipped in and went towards the empty chair. But she had no sooner sat down than she repented, and wished herself back again.

Mrs. Tulliver gave a little scream as she saw her, and felt such a "turn" that she dropped the large gravy-spoon into the dish with the most serious results to the table-cloth. For Kezia had not betrayed the reason of Maggie's refusal to come down, not liking to give her mistress a shock in the moment of carving; and Mrs. Tulliver thought there was nothing worse in question than a fit of perverseness, which was inflicting its own punishment by depriving Maggie of half her dinner.

Mrs. Tulliver's scream made all eyes turn towards the same point as her own, and Maggie's cheeks and ears began to burn, while uncle Glegg, a kind-looking, white-haired old gentleman, said,—

"Hey-day! what little gell's this? Why, I don't know her. Is it some little gell you've picked up in the road, Kezia?"

"Why, she's gone and cut her hair herself," said Mr. Tulliver in an undertone to Mr. Deane, laughing with much enjoyment. "Did you ever know such a little hussy as it is?"

"Why, little miss, you've made yourself look very funny," said uncle Pullet, and perhaps he never in his life made an observation which was felt to be so lacerating.

"Fie, for shame!" said aunt Glegg, in her loudest, severest tone of reproof. "Little gells as cut their own hair should be whipped and fed on bread and water—not come and sit down with their aunts and uncles."

"Ay, ay," said uncle Glegg, meaning to give a playful turn to this denunciation; "she must be sent to jail, I think, and they'll cut the rest of her hair off there, and make it all even."

"She's more like a gipsy nor ever," said aunt Pullet, in a pitying tone. "It's very bad luck, sister, as the gell should be so brown; the boy's fair enough. I doubt it'll stand in her way i' life, to be so brown."

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"She's a naughty child, as'll break her mother's heart," said Mrs. Tulliver, with the tears in her eyes.

Maggie seemed to be listening to a chorus of reproach and derision. Her first flush came from anger, which gave her a transient power of defiance, and Tom thought she was braving it out, supported by the recent appearance of the pudding and custard. Under this impression, he whispered, "O my, Maggie, I told you you'd catch it." He meant to be friendly, but Maggie felt convinced that Tom was rejoicing in her ignominy. Her feeble power of defiance left her in an instant, her heart swelled, and, getting up from her chair, she ran to her father, hid her face on his shoulder, and burst out into loud sobbing.

"Come, come, my wench," said her father soothingly, putting his arm round her, "never mind; you was i' the right to cut it off if it plagued you. Give over crying; father'll take your part."

Delicious words of tenderness! Maggie never forgot any of these moments when her father "took her part"; she kept them in her heart, and thought of them long years after, when every one else said that her father had done very ill by his children.

"How your husband does spoil that child, Bessy!" said Mrs. Glegg, in a loud "aside" to Mrs. Tulliver. "It'll be the ruin of her, if you don't take care. My father niver brought his children up so, else we should ha' been a different sort o' family to what we are."

Mrs. Tulliver's domestic sorrows seemed at this moment to have reached the point at which insensibility begins. She took no notice of her sister's remark, but threw back her cap-strings and dispensed the pudding in mute resignation.

With the dessert there came entire deliverance for Maggie, for the children were told they might have their nuts and wine in the summer-house, since the day was so mild, and they scampered out among the budding bushes of the garden with the alacrity of small animals getting from under a burning glass.

The Mill on the Floss.

43...A MAD TEA PARTY

ALICE had not gone much farther before she came in sight of the house of the March Hare : she thought it must be the right house, because the chimneys were shaped like ears and the roof was thatched with fur. It was so large a house, that she did not like to go nearer till she had nibbled some more of the left-hand bit of mushroom, and raised herself to about two feet high : even then she walked up towards it rather timidly, saying to herself, " Suppose it should be raving mad after all ! ¹ I almost wish I'd gone to see the Hatter instead ! "

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it : a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. " Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse," thought Alice ; " only as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind."

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it. " No room ! No room ! " they cried out when they saw Alice coming. " There's *plenty* of room ! " said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

" Have some wine," the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. " I don't see any wine," she remarked.

" There isn't any," said the March Hare.

" Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it," said Alice angrily.

" It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited," said the March Hare.

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"I didn't know it was *your* table," said Alice; "it's laid for a great many more than three."

"Your hair wants cutting," said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

"You shouldn't make personal remarks," Alice said with some severity; "it's very rude."

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he *said* was "Why is a raven like a writing-desk?"

"Come, we shall have some fun now!" thought Alice. "I'm glad they've begun asking riddles.—I believe I can guess that," she added aloud.

"Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?" said the March Hare.

"Exactly so," said Alice.

"Then you should say what you mean," the March Hare went on.

"I do," Alice hastily replied; "at least—at least I mean what I say—that's the same thing, you know."

"Not the same thing a bit!" said the Hatter. "You might just as well say that 'I see what I eat' is the same thing as 'I eat what I see'!"

"You might just as well say," added the March Hare, "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"

"You might just as well say," added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, "that 'I breathe when I sleep' is the same thing as 'I sleep when I breathe'!"

"It *is* the same thing with you," said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped.

The Hatter was the first to break the silence. "What day of the month is it?" he said, turning to Alice: he had taken his watch out of his pocket, and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and then, and holding it to his ear.

Alice considered a little, and then said "The fourth."

"Two days wrong!" sighed the Hatter. "I told you

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butter wouldn't suit the works ! " he added, looking angrily at the March Hare.

" It was the *best* butter," the March Hare meekly replied.

" Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well," the Hatter grumbled : " You shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife."

The March Hare took the watch and looked at it gloomily : then he dipped it into his cup of tea, and looked at it again : but he could think of nothing better to say than his first remark, " It was the *best* butter, you know."

Alice had been looking over his shoulder with some curiosity. " What a funny watch ! " she remarked. " It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is ! "

" Why should it ? " muttered the Hatter. " Does *your* watch tell you what year it is ? "

" Of course not," Alice replied very readily : " but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together."

" Which is just the case with *mine*," said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remark seemed to have no meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. " I don't quite understand," she said, as politely as she could.

" The Dormouse is asleep again," said the Hatter, and he poured a little hot tea upon its nose.

The Dormouse shook its head impatiently and said, without opening its eyes : " Of course, of course ; just what I was going to remark myself."

" Have you guessed the riddle yet ? " the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

" No, I give it up," Alice replied : " what's the answer ? "

" I haven't the slightest idea," said the Hatter.

" Nor I," said the March Hare.

Alice sighed wearily. " I think you might do something better with the time," she said, " than waste it asking riddles with no answers."

" If you knew Time as well as I do," said the Hatter, " you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*."

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"I don't know what you mean," said Alice.

"Of course you don't!" the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!"

"Perhaps not," Alice cautiously replied: "but I know I have to beat time when I learn music."

"Ah! that accounts for it," said the Hatter. "He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: you'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one, time for dinner!"

"That would be grand, certainly," said Alice thoughtfully: "but then—I shouldn't be hungry for it."

"Not at first, perhaps," said the Hatter: "but you could keep it to half-past one as long as you liked."

"Is that the way *you* manage?" Alice asked.

The Hatter shook his head mournfully. "Not I!" he replied. "We quarrelled last March—just before *he* went mad, you know—" (pointing with his teaspoon at the March Hare), "—it was the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing

*'Twinkle, twinkle little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!'*

You know the song, perhaps?"

"I've heard something like it," said Alice.

"It goes on, you know," the Hatter continued, "in this way:

*'Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle——'*

Here the Dormouse shook itself, and began singing in its sleep "*Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle——*" and went on so long that they had to pinch it to make it stop.

"Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse," said the

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Hatter, "when the Queen jumped up and bawled out 'He's murdering the time! Off with his head!'"

"How dreadfully savage!" exclaimed Alice.

"And ever since that," the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, "he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now."

A bright idea came into Alice's head. "Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?" she asked.

"Yes, that's it," said the Hatter with a sigh: "it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles."

"Then you keep moving round, I suppose?" said Alice.

"Exactly so," said the Hatter: "as the things get used up."

"But what happens when you come to the beginning again?" Alice ventured to ask.

"Suppose we change the subject," the March Hare interrupted, yawning. "I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story."

"I'm afraid I don't know one," said Alice, rather alarmed at the proposal.

"Then the Dormouse shall!" they both cried. "Wake up, Dormouse!" And they pinched it on both sides at once.

"Tell us a story!" said the March Hare.

"Yes, please do!" pleaded Alice.

"And be quick about it," added the Hatter, "or you'll be asleep again before it's done."

"Once upon a time there were three little sisters," the Dormouse began in a great hurry; "and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well——"

"What did they live on?" said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

"They lived on treacle," said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

Alice tried to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary way of living would be like, but it puzzled her too much, so

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she went on : “ But why did they live at the bottom of a well ? ”

“ Take some more tea,” the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

“ I’ve had nothing yet,” Alice replied in an offended tone, “ so I can’t take more.”

“ You mean you can’t take *less*,” said the Hatter : “ it’s very easy to take *more* than nothing.”

“ Nobody asked *your* opinion,” said Alice.

“ Who’s making personal remarks now ? ” the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice did not quite know what to say to this : so she helped herself to some tea and bread-and-butter, and then turned to the Dormouse, and repeated her question. “ Why did they live at the bottom of a well ? ”

The Dormouse again took a minute or two to think about it, and then said “ It was a treacle-well.”

“ There’s no such thing ! ” Alice was beginning very angrily, but the Hatter and the March Hare went on “ Sh ! sh ! ” and the Dormouse sulkily remarked, “ If you can’t be civil you’d better finish the story for yourself.”

“ No, please go on ! ” Alice said. “ I won’t interrupt again. I dare say there may be *one*.”

“ One, indeed ! ” said the Dormouse indignantly. However, he consented to go on. “ And so these three little sisters—they were learning to draw, you know——”

“ What did they draw ? ” said Alice, quite forgetting her promise.

“ Treacle,” said the Dormouse, without considering at all this time.

“ I want a clean cup,” interrupted the Hatter : “ let’s all move one place on.”

He moved on as he spoke, and the Dormouse followed him : the March Hare moved into the Dormouse’s place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change : and Alice was a good deal worse off, as the March Hare had just upset the milk-jug into his plate.

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Alice did not wish to offend the Dormouse again, so she began very cautiously : “ But I don’t understand. Where did they draw the treacle from ? ”

“ You can draw water out of a water-well,” said the hatter ; “ so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle-well—eh, stupid ? ”

“ But they were *in* the well,” Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice this last remark.

“ Of course they were,” said the Dormouse ; “—well in.”

This answer so confused poor Alice, that she let the Dormouse go on for some time without interrupting it.

“ They were learning to draw,” the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting very sleepy ; “ and they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M——”

“ Why with an M ? ” said Alice.

“ Why not ? ” said the March Hare.

Alice was silent.

The Dormouse had closed its eyes by this time, and was going off into a doze ; but, on being pinched by the Hatter, it woke up again with a little shriek, and went on : “ —that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness—you know you say things are ‘ much of a muchness ’—did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness ? ”

“ Really, now you ask me,” said Alice, very much confused, “ I don’t think——”

“ Then you shouldn’t talk,” said the Hatter.

This piece of rudeness was more than Alice could bear : she got up in great disgust, and walked off ; the Dormouse fell asleep instantly, and neither of the others took the least notice of her going.

“ At any rate I’ll never go *there* again ! ” said Alice as she picked her way through the wood. “ It’s the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life ! ”

Alice in Wonderland.

THOMAS HARDY

1840-1927

44...INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

THE room inside was lighted only by the ruddy glow from the kiln-mouth, which shone over the floor with the streaming horizontality of the setting sun, and threw upwards the shadows of all facial irregularities in those assembled around. The stone-flag floor was worn into a path from the doorway to the kiln, and into undulations everywhere. A curved settle of unplanned oak stretched along one side, and in a remote corner was a small bed and bedstead, the owner and frequent occupier of which was the malster.

This aged man was now sitting opposite the fire, his frosty white hair and beard overgrowing his gnarled figure like the grey moss and lichen upon a leafless apple-tree. He wore breeches and the laced-up shoes called ankle-jacks ; he kept his eyes fixed upon the fire.

Gabriel's nose was greeted by an atmosphere laden with the sweet smell of new malt. The conversation (which seemed to have been concerning the origin of the fire) immediately ceased, and every one ocularly criticised him to the degree expressed by contracting the flesh of their foreheads and looking at him with narrowed eyelids, as if he had been a light too strong for their sight. Several exclaimed meditatively, after this operation had been completed——

“ Oh, 'tis the new shepherd, 'a b'lieve.”

“ We thought we heard a hand pawing about the door for the bobbin, but weren't sure 'twere not a dead leaf blown across,” said another. “ Come in, shepherd ; sure ye be welcome, though we don't know yer name.”

“ Gabriel Oak, that's my name, neighbours.”

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

The ancient malster sitting in the midst turned at this—his turning being as the turning of a rusty crane.

“That’s never Gable Oak’s grandson over at Norcombe—never!” he said, as a formula expressive of surprise, which nobody was supposed for a moment to take literally.

“My father and grandfather were old men of the name of Gabriel,” said the shepherd, placidly.

“Thought I knowed the man’s face as I seed him on the rick!—thought I did! And where be ye trading o’t to now, shepherd?”

“I’m thinking of biding here,” said Mr. Oak.

“Knowed yer grandfather for years and years!” continued the malster, the words coming forth of their own accord, as if the momentum previously imparted had been sufficient.

“Ah!—and did you!”

“Knowed yer grandmother.”

“And her too!”

“Likewise knowed yer father when he was a child. Why, my boy Jacob there and your father were sworn brothers—that they were sure—weren’t ye, Jacob?”

“Ay, sure,” said his son, a young man about sixty-five, with a semi-bald head and one tooth in the left centre of his upper jaw, which made much of itself by standing prominent, like a milestone in a bank. “But ’twas Joe had most to do with him. However, my son William must have knowed the very man afore us—didn’t ye, Billy, afore ye left Norcombe?”

“No, ’twas Andrew,” said Jacob’s son Billy, a child of forty, or thereabouts, who manifested the peculiarity of possessing a cheerful soul in a gloomy body, and whose whiskers were assuming a chinchilla shade here and there.

“I can mind Andrew,” said Oak, “as being a man in the place when I was quite a child.”

“Ay—the other day I and my youngest daughter, Liddy, were over at my grandson’s christening,” continued Billy. “We were talking about this very family, and ’twas only last Purification Day in this very world, when the use-money is

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

gied away to the second-best poor folk, you know, shepherd, and I can mind the day because they all had to traypse up to the vestry—yes, this very man's family."

"Come, shepherd, and drink. 'Tis gape and swaller with us—a drap of sommit, but not of much account," said the malster, removing from the fire his eyes, which were vermilion-red and bleared by gazing into it for so many years. "Take up the God-forgive-me, Jacob. See if 'tis warm, Jacob."

Jacob stooped to the God-forgive-me, which was a two-handled tall mug standing in the ashes, cracked and charred with heat: it was rather furred with extraneous matter about the outside, especially in the crevices of the handles, the innermost curves of which may not have seen daylight for several years by reason of this encrustation thereon—formed of ashes accidentally wetted with cider and baked hard; but to the mind of any sensible drinker the cup was no worse for that, being incontestably clean on the inside and about the rim. It may be observed that such a class of mug is called a God-forgive-me in Weatherbury and its vicinity for uncertain reasons; probably because its size makes any given toper feel ashamed of himself when he sees its bottom in drinking it empty.

Jacob, on receiving the order to see if the liquor was warm enough, placidly dipped his forefinger into it by way of thermometer, and having pronounced it nearly of the proper degree, raised the cup and very civilly attempted to dust some of the ashes from the bottom with the skirt of his smock-frock, because Shepherd Oak was a stranger.

"A clane cup for the shepherd," said the malster commandingly.

"No, not at all," said Gabriel, in a reproving tone of considerateness. "I never fuss about dirt in its pure state, and when I know what sort it is." Taking the mug, he drank an inch or more from the depth of its contents, and duly passed it to the next man. "I wouldn't think of giving such trouble to neighbours in washing up when there's so much work to be done in the world already," continued Oak

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

in a moister tone, after recovering from the stoppage of breath which is occasioned by pulls at large mugs.

"A right sensible man," said Jacob.

"True, true, as the old woman said," observed a brisk young man—Mark Clark by name, a genial and pleasant gentleman, whom to meet anywhere in your travels was to know, to know was to drink with, and to drink with was unfortunately to pay for.

"And here's a mouthful of bread and bacon that mis'ess have sent, shepherd. The cider will go down better with a bit of victuals. Don't ye chaw quite close, shepherd, for I let the bacon fall in the road outside as I was bringing it along, and may be 'tis rather gritty. There, 'tis clane dirt, and we all know what that is, as you say, and you bain't a particular man we see, shepherd."

"True, true—not at all," said the friendly Oak.

"Don't let your teeth quite meet, and you won't feel the sandiness at all. Ah! 'tis wonderful what can be done by contrivance!"

"My own mind exactly, neighbour."

"Ah! he's his grandfer's own grandson!—his grandfer were just such a nice unparticular man!" said the malster.

"Drink, Henry Fray—drink," magnanimously said Jan Coggan, a person who held Saint-Simonian notions of share and share alike where liquor was concerned, as the vessel showed signs of approaching him in its gradual revolution among them.

Having at this moment reached the end of a wistful gaze into mid-air, Henry did not refuse. He was a man of more than middle age, with eyebrows high up in his forehead, who laid it down that the law of the world was bad, with a long-suffering look through his listeners at the world alluded to, as it presented itself to his imagination. He always signed his name "Henery"—strenuously insisting upon that spelling, and if any passing schoolmaster ventured to remark that the second "e" was superfluous and old-fashioned, he received the reply that "H-e-n-e-r-y" was the name he was christened and the name he would stick to

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

—in the tone of one to whom orthographical differences were matters which had a great deal to do with personal character.

Mr. Jan Coggan, who had passed the cup to Henery, was a crimson man with a spacious countenance and private glimmer in his eye, whose name had appeared on the marriage register of Weatherbury and neighbouring parishes as best man and chief witness in countless unions of the previous twenty years ; he also very frequently filled the post of head godfather in baptisms of the subtly-jovial kind.

“Come, Mark Clark—come. There’s plenty more in the barrel,” said Jan.

“Ay ! that I will, as the doctor said,” replied Mr. Clark, who, twenty years younger than Jan Coggan, revolved in the same orbit. He secreted mirth on all occasions for special discharge at popular parties.

“Why, Joseph Poorgrass, ye ha’n’t had a drop !” said Mr. Coggan to a very shrinking man in the background, thrusting the cup towards him.

“Such a shy man as he is !” said Jacob Smallbury. “Why, ye’ve hardly had strength of eye enough to look in our young mis’ess’s face, so I hear, Joseph ?”

All looked at Joseph Poorgrass with pitying reproach.

“No, I’ve hardly looked at her at all,” faltered Joseph, reducing his body smaller whilst talking, apparently from a meek sense of undue prominence. “And when I seed her, ’twas nothing but blushes with me !”

“Poor feller !” said Mr. Clark.

“’Tis a curious nature for a man,” said Jan Coggan.

“Yes,” continued Joseph Poorgrass—his shyness, which was so painful as a defect, filling him with a mild complacency now that it was regarded as an interesting study. “’Twere blush, blush, blush with me every minute of the time when she was speaking to me.”

“I believe ye, Joseph Poorgrass, for we all know ye to be a very bashful man.”

“’Tis terrible bad for a man, poor soul,” said the malster. “And how long have ye suffered from it, Joseph ?”

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

"Oh, ever since I was a boy. Yes—mother was concerned to her heart about it—yes. But 'twas all nought."

"Did ye ever take anything to try and stop it, Joseph Poorgrass?"

"Oh, ay, tried all sorts. They took me to Greenhill Fair, and into a great large jerry-go-nimble show, where there were women-folk riding round—standing upon horses, with hardly anything on; but it didn't cure me a morsel. And then I was put errand-man at the Woman's Skittle Alley at the back of the Tailor's Arms in Casterbridge. 'Twas a horrible evil situation, and a very curious place for a good man. I had to stand and look wicked people in the face from morning till night; but 'twas no use—I was just as bad as ever after all. Blushes hev been in the family for generations. There, 'tis a happy providence that I be no worse, and I feel the blessing."

"True," said Jacob Smallbury, deepening his thoughts to a profounder view of the subject. "'Tis a thought to look at, that ye might have been worse; but even as you be, 'tis a very bad affliction for ye, Joseph. For ye see, shepherd, though 'tis very well for a woman, dang it all, 'tis awkward for a man like him, poor feller?" He appealed to the shepherd by a feeling glance.

"'Tis, 'tis," said Gabriel, recovering from a meditation. "Yes, very awkward for the man."

"Ay, and he's very timid, too," observed Jan Coggan. "Once he had been working late at Windleton, and had had a drap of drink, and lost his way as he was coming home along through Yalbury Wood, didn't ye, Master Poorgrass?"

"No, no, no; not that story!" expostulated the modest man, forcing a laugh to bury his concern.

"—And so 'a lost himself quite," continued Mr. Coggan, with an impassive face, implying that a true narrative, like time and tide, must run its course and would wait for no man. "And as he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeared, and not able to find his way out of the trees nohow, 'a cried out, 'Man-a-lost! man-a-lost!' A owl in a tree happened to be crying 'Whoo-whoo-whoo!'

INSIDE THE MALT-HOUSE

as owls do, you know, shepherd” (Gabriel nodded), “and Joseph, all in a tremble, said ‘Joseph Poorgrass, of Weatherbury, sir!’”

“No, no, now—that’s too much!” said the timid man, becoming a man of brazen courage all of a sudden. “I didn’t say *sir*. I’ll take my oath I didn’t say ‘Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury, sir.’ No, no; what’s right is right, and I never said sir to the bird, knowing very well that no man of a gentleman’s rank would be hollering there at that time o’ night. ‘Joseph Poorgrass of Weatherbury,’—that’s every word I said, and I shouldn’t ha’ said that if’t hadn’t been for Keeper Day’s metheglin. . . . There, ’twas a merciful thing it ended where it did.”

The question of which was right was tacitly waived by the company.

Far from the Madding Crowd.

JEROME K. JEROME

1859-1927

45...HARRIS SINGS A COMIC SONG

You have never heard Harris sing a comic song, or you would understand the service I had rendered to mankind. It is one of Harris's fixed ideas that he *can* sing a comic song; the fixed idea, on the contrary, among those of Harris's friends who have heard him try, is that he *can't*, and never will be able to, and that he ought not to be allowed to try.

When Harris is at a party, and is asked to sing, he replies: "Well, I can only sing a *comic* song, you know;" and he says it in a tone that implies that his singing of *that*, however, is a thing that you ought to hear once, and then die.

"Oh, that *is* nice," says the hostess. "Do sing one, Mr. Harris;" and Harris gets up, and makes for the piano, with the beaming cheeriness of a generous-minded man who is just about to give somebody something.

"Now, silence, please, everybody," says the hostess, turning round; "Mr. Harris is going to sing a comic song!"

"Oh, how jolly!" they murmur; and they hurry in from the conservatory, and come up from the stairs, and go and fetch each other from all over the house, and crowd into the drawing-room, and sit round, all smirking in anticipation.

Then Harris begins.

Well, you don't look for much of a voice in a comic song. You don't expect correct phrasing or vocalization. You don't mind if a man does find out, when in the middle of a note, that he is too high, and comes down with a jerk. You don't bother about time. You don't mind a man being two bars in front of the accompaniment, and easing up in the middle of a line to argue it out with the pianist, and then starting the verse afresh. But you do expect the words.

HARRIS SINGS A COMIC SONG

You don't expect a man to never remember more than the first three lines of the first verse, and to keep on repeating these until it is time to begin the chorus. You don't expect a man to break off in the middle of a line, and snigger, and say, it's very funny, but he's blest if he can think of the rest of it, and then try and make it up for himself, and, afterwards, suddenly recollect it, when he has got to an entirely different part of the song, and break off without a word of warning, to go back and let you have it then and there. You don't—well, I will just give you an idea of Harris's comic singing, and then you can judge of it for yourself.

Harris (standing up in front of piano and addressing the expectant mob) : "I'm afraid it's a very old thing, you know. I expect you all know it, you know. But it's the only thing I know. It's the Judge's song out of Pinafore—no, I don't mean Pinafore—I mean—you know what I mean—the other thing, you know. You must all join in the chorus, you know."

[Murmurs of delight and anxiety to join in the chorus.

Brilliant performance of prelude to the Judge's song in "Trial by Jury" by nervous pianist. Moment arrives for Harris to join in. Harris takes no notice of it. Nervous pianist commences prelude over again, and Harris, commencing singing at the same time, dashes off the first two lines of the First Lord's song out of "Pinafore." Nervous pianist tries to push on with prelude, gives it up, and tries to follow Harris with accompaniment to Judge's song out of "Trial by Jury," finds that doesn't answer, and tries to recollect what he is doing, and where he is, feels his mind giving way, and stops short.

Harris (with kindly encouragement) : "It's all right. You're doing it very well indeed—go on."

Nervous Pianist : "I'm afraid there's a mistake somewhere. What are you singing?"

Harris (promptly) : "Why, the Judge's song out of Trial by Jury. Don't you know it?"

Some Friend of Harris's (from the back of the room) : "No, you're not, you chuckle-head, you're singing the Admiral's song from Pinafore."

HARRIS SINGS A COMIC SONG

[Long argument between Harris and Harris's friend as to what Harris is really singing. Friend finally suggests that it doesn't matter what Harris is singing so long as Harris gets on and sings it, and Harris, with an evident sense of injustice rankling inside him, requests pianist to begin again. Pianist, thereupon, starts prelude to the Admiral's song, and Harris, seizing what he considers to be a favourable opening in the music, begins.

Harris :

“ ‘ When I was young and called to the bar.’ ”

[General roar of laughter, taken by Harris as a compliment. Pianist, thinking of his wife and family, gives up the unequal contest and retires ; his place being taken by a stronger-nerved man.

The New Pianist (cheerily) : “ Now then, old man, you start off, and I'll follow. We won't bother about any prelude.”

Harris (upon whom the explanation of matters has slowly dawned—laughing) : “ By Jove ! I beg your pardon. Of course—I've been mixing up the two songs. It was Jenkins who confused me, you know. Now then—

(Singing ; his voice appearing to come from the cellar, and suggesting the first low warnings of an approaching earthquake.)

“ ‘ When I was young I served a term
As office-boy to an attorney's firm.’ ”

(Aside to pianist) : “ It is too low, old man ; we'll have that over again, if you don't mind.”

[Sings first two lines over again, in a high falsetto this time. Great surprise on the part of the audience. Nervous old lady near the fire begins to cry, and has to be led out.

Harris (continuing) :

“ ‘ I swept the windows and I swept the door,
And I—— ’

No—no, I cleaned the windows of the big front door. And I polished up the floor—no, dash it—I beg your pardon—

HARRIS SINGS A COMIC SONG

funny thing, I can't think of that line. And I—and I—Oh, well, we'll get on to the chorus, and chance it (*sings*) :

“ ‘ And I diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-de,
Till now I am ruler of the Queen's navee.’

Now then, chorus—it's the last two lines repeated, you know.”

General Chorus :

“ And he diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-diddle-dēē'd,
Till now he is ruler of the Queen's navēē.”

And Harris never sees what an ass he is making of himself, and how he is annoying a lot of people who never did him any harm. He honestly imagines that he has given them a treat, and says he will sing another comic song after supper.

Three Men in a Boat.

F. ANSTEY

1856—

46...AT A WEDDING

Scene : Interior of Church. Wedding Guests arriving, and exchanging airy recognitions as they settle down in their places. Bridesmaids in various states of self-consciousness, collected at door. Loud and sustained buzz of feminine whispering.

Policeman (on guard at another door, to people with a mania for seeing complete strangers married) : Very sorry, ladies, but if you're not provided with tickets, I can't let you in.

The People (with a mania, &c.) : But this is a public place, isn't it ?

Policeman (not feeling competent to argue the point) : Those are my orders. *[The People, &c., depart disconsolate.]*

Verger (to Guests with pink tickets) : Any of those seats there.

"Pink" Guests (attempting to pass a crimson rope which bars the central passage) : We want to be near the altar—we can't see here !

Verger (in a superior manner) : The higher seats are set apart for parties with *white* tickets.

"Pink" Guests (to one another indignantly) : And after we'd sent that girl a salad-bowl, too !

[They employ themselves in picking out "White" Guests who ought properly to have been "Pink," remark that it is the most shamefully-managed wedding they ever saw, and recur bitterly at intervals to the salad-bowl.]

Mrs. Ripplebrook (who always comes early "to see the people") : Oh, there'll be a tremendous crush, of course—they know everybody. Look, the De Lacy Vespes have just come in—what a pity it is that eldest girl has such a red

AT A WEDDING

nose—she'd be *quite* goodlooking without it ! . . . There's Narcissus Runderceed, you see *him* everywhere. (*Bows and smiles at him effusively.*) Horrid creature ! And *how* fat he's getting ! Do you know who *that* is ? That's Miss Mabel Maycup of the "Proscenium," you know,—looks ever so much older by daylight, doesn't she ? I suppose she's not one of the *bride's* friends ! By the way, have you ever met *him*—this Pilbergilt man, the bridegroom, I mean ? Oh, my dear, a perfect horror ! Ten years older than she is, and one hears *such* stories about him ! In fact, it was only his money that—but her people were *delighted*, of course. Ah, she's coming now ; look how the bridesmaids are all "preening" themselves ! That's the bridegroom—*doesn't* he look yellow ?

Best Man (in a whisper to Bridegroom) : Pull yourself together, old chappie, you are looking *so* chippy !

Bridegroom : I *feel* chippy, too. Fact is, those farewell suppers are a mistake—I'll never give another.

Mrs. Ripplebrook : Now the choir are going down to meet them. Don't you wish they'd invent a new hymn for weddings ? I'm *so* tired of that "Eden" one. There she is. I always think this is such a *solemn* moment, don't you ? Can you see whether it's silk or *suède* gloves the bridesmaids are wearing ? That's her father, whose arm she's on. They say he disapproved, but he doesn't count. Her mother's behind with the hook nose ; why on earth *she* should cry, I *don't* know—it's all *her* doing ! She makes a pale bride, doesn't she ? But white duchesse satin would be trying even to a beauty. I hear she threw over poor young Oldglove most shamefully. *Why* does that tiresome old bishop mumble so ? I can't hear a word.

Housemaid belonging to Bride's Family (to Nurse) : I wonder at that Louisa Jane taking on herself to cry, when she only came Toosday fortnight ! Now you and me have got some *claim* to cry.

The Nurse (loftily) : Them kitchen-maids can't be expected to know their place, or what's required of them !

AT A WEDDING

IN THE VESTRY

General congratulations, compliments, kisses, and signatures.

Bridegroom (to Best Man) : I say, dear boy, I look to you to square all these Johnnies, you know.

[Which is his irreverent mode of designating the Bishop and assistant clergymen.]

IN CHURCH, DURING THE INTERVAL

Mrs. Ripplebrook : Very daring of them to be married in May, isn't it? I knew a girl who was married in May once—and the very first time they gave a dinner-party, her cook came up drunk soon after the salmon, and gave her warning before everybody! *dreadful*, wasn't it? I suppose you'll go on to the house and see the presents? Do—I'm going. Oh, you've seen mine? It is handsome, isn't it? I was going to get her quite an ordinary one at the Stores—but that was when I thought she was only going to be Mrs. Oldglove. Ah, there's the "Wedding March" at last; here they come!

[Bride and Bridegroom pass slowly down central passage, recognizing their friends at hazard; several are left unnoticed with their elaborately prepared smile wasting its sweetness on the bride's brothers. A young man, rather negligently dressed, who has been standing behind Mrs. Ripplebrook the whole time, forces his way to the front.]

The Young Man (to himself) : She shall see me—if she has the courage to meet my eye after her conduct!

The Bride : What, Mr. Oldglove? I'd no idea you were in town! We shall see you presently, I hope.

[She passes on, leaving the Young Man to think of all the scathing replies he might have made.]

An Old Maid (weeping in the gallery; she has got in as "the Bridegroom's Aunt," a character in which she attends every wedding) : Poor young things!—to think of all the troubles before them!

Bridegroom's Friends : Pretty wedding, wasn't it?

Bride's Friends : Not a pretty wedding, was it?

AT A WEDDING

IN THE CARRIAGE

Bridegroom (finding the silence embarrassing) : Hope they'll give us time enough to change, and all that. Horrid bore if we missed our train and had to wait !

Bride : Oh, if you are going to find everything a bore already !

Bridegroom : Well, isn't it ?

IN THE DRAWING-ROOM

[Presents laid out ; Guests wandering round, keeping a furtive look-out for their own offerings, and feeling deeply incensed if they are not prominently displayed. Others consult the congratulatory telegrams as though they were of European interest. A Detective, noticeable by his sumptuous get-up and his uneasy bearing, watches the jewellery. Short-sighted Old Gentleman (friend of the Bride's) approaches, and, misled by Detective's festal attire, takes him for the Bridegroom.]

The Shortsighted Old Gentleman (with emotion) : This is a great responsibility you have undertaken to-day, sir. I hope you will be—ah—worthy of it.

Detective (professionally sensitive) : Thank you ; but it's not the first time I've undertaken such a job, not by a very long way.

The Shortsighted Old Gentleman (moving off aghast) : This is dreadful !—they *can't* know ! *How* many times, and where are they all now ? Oh, some one ought to speak to her mother ! I would myself—only——

[Goes in search of some champagne.]

The Bride's Mother (to Guest) : So kind of you to remember my girl, and to send her that charming—*(she suddenly forgets whether she is speaking to the donor of the nineteenth carriage clock, or the fifteenth fish-slice)*—that charming—er—*(mumble)*—quite the prettiest—er—*(mumble)*—I ever saw. But you always have such taste.

[Mild surprise of Guest, conscious of having presented, in despair, a plated toast-rack of unpretentious design.]

AT A WEDDING

Mr. Oldglove (who has come on after all—bitterly to the Bride): All I can wish you, Mrs.—(*choking*)—Mrs. Pilbergilt, is that you may be as happy as—as you *deserve!*

The Bride (sweetly): Thanks awfully. That's the prettiest thing I've had said to me yet. (*To Neighbour*) Oh, Mr. Cashley, how *am* I to thank you?—that *lovely* plate-warmer!

[Mr. Oldglove retires baffled, and contemplates committing suicide with a piece of wedding-cake.]

IN THE CARRIAGE

The Bridegroom: Well, *that's* over!

Bride (icily): I wish you would contrive not to fidget so!

Bridegroom: When a fellow has about a stone-and-a-half of rice down the back of his neck, it makes him rather restless. What are all the chappies staring at us for? I'm sure we don't look as newly-married as all *that!*

Bride (complacently): You would not notice such trifles; but Eulalie has really surpassed herself over my going-away dress.

Bridegroom: No, by Jove, I'm hanged if it's *that*.

Bride: Perhaps you think *you* are the attraction?

Bridegroom: Spotted it as we passed that shop-window. I say—er—Albinia, I'm not joking—*really* I'm not! There's a beast of a white satin slipper on the roof of the brougham!

Voces Populi.

47...PARSONS GETS DISMISSED

SUDDENLY Parsons got himself dismissed.

He got himself dismissed under circumstances of peculiar violence, that left a deep impression on Mr. Polly's mind. He wondered about it for years afterwards, trying to get the rights of the case.

Parsons' apprenticeship was over; he had reached the status of an Improver, and he dressed the window of the Manchester department. By his own standards he dressed it wonderfully. "Well, O' Man," he used to say, "there's one thing about my position here—I *can* dress a window."

And when trouble was under discussion he would hold that "little Fluffums"—which was the apprentices' name for Mr. Garvace, the senior partner and managing director of the Bazaar—would think twice before he got rid of the only man in the place who could make a windowful of Manchester goods *tell*.

Then, like many a fellow-artist, he fell a prey to theories.

"The art of window dressing is in its infancy, O' Man—in its blooming Infancy. All balance and stiffness like a blessed Egyptian picture. No Joy in it, no blooming Joy! Conventional. A shop window ought to get hold of people, *grip* 'em as they go along. It stands to reason. Grip!"

His voice would sink to a kind of quiet bellow. "Do they grip?"

Then, after a pause, a savage roar: "*Naw!*"

"He's got a Heavy on," said Mr. Polly. "Go it, O' Man; let's have some more of it."

"Look at old Morrison's dress-stuff windows! Tidy, tasteful, correct, I grant you, but Bleak!" He let out the word reinforced to a shout: "Bleak!"

PARSONS GETS DISMISSED

"Bleak!" echoed Mr. Polly.

"Just pieces of stuff in rows, rows of tidy little puffs, perhaps one bit just unrolled, quiet tickets."

"Might as well be in church, O' Man," said Mr. Polly.

"A window ought to be exciting," said Parsons; "it ought to make you say, "'El-lo!" when you see it."

He paused, and Platt watched him over a snorting pipe.

"Rockcockyo," said Mr. Polly.

"We want a new school of window dressing," said Parsons, regardless of the comment. "A New School! The Port Burdock school. Day after to-morrow I change the Fitzallan Street stuff. This time it's going to be a change. I mean to have a crowd or bust!"

And as a matter of fact he did both.

His voice dropped to a note of self-reproach. "I've been timid, O' Man. I've been holding myself in. I haven't done myself Justice. I've kept down the simmering, seething, teeming ideas. . . . All that's over now."

"Over," gulped Polly.

"Over for good and all, O' Man."

Platt came to Polly, who was sorting up collar-boxes. "O' Man's doing his Blooming Window."

"What window?"

"What he said."

Polly remembered.

He went on with his collar-boxes with his eye on his senior, Mansfield. Mansfield was presently called away to the counting-house, and instantly Polly shot out by the street door, and made a rapid transit along the street front past the Manchester window, and so into the silkroom door. He could not linger long, but he gathered joy, a swift and fearful joy, from his brief inspection of Parsons' unconscious back. Parsons had his tail-coat off, and was working with vigour; his habit of pulling his waistcoat straps to their utmost brought out all the agreeable promise of corpulence in his youthful frame. He was blowing excitedly and running his fingers through his hair, and then moving with

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all the swift eagerness of a man inspired. All about his feet and knees were scarlet blankets, not folded, not formally unfolded, but—the only phrase is—shied about. And a great bar sinister of roller towelling stretched across the front of the window on which was a ticket, and the ticket said in bold, black letters : “ LOOK ! ”

So soon as Mr. Polly got into the silk department and met Platt he knew he had not lingered nearly long enough outside.

“ Did you see the boards at the back ? ” said Platt.

Mr. Polly hadn't. “ The High Egrugious is fairly On,” he said, and dived down to return by devious subterranean routes to the outfitting department.

Presently the street door opened and Platt, with an air of intense devotion to business assumed to cover his adoption of that unusual route, came in and made for the staircase down to the warehouse. He rolled up his eyes at Polly. “ Oh, *Lor !* ” he said, and vanished.

Irresistible curiosity seized Polly. Should he go through the shop to the Manchester department, or risk a second transit outside ?

He was impelled to make a dive at the street door.

“ Where are you going ? ” asked Mansfield.

“ Lill dog,” said Polly, with an air of lucid explanation, and left him to get any meaning he could from it.

Parsons was worth the subsequent trouble. Parsons really was extremely rich. This time Polly stopped to take it in.

Parsons had made a huge asymmetrical pile of thick white and red blankets twisted and rolled to accentuate their woolly richness heaped up in a warm disorder, with large window tickets inscribed in blazing red letters : “ Cosy Comfort at Cut Prices,” and “ Curl up and Cuddle below Cost.” Regardless of the daylight he had turned up the electric light on that side of the window to reflect a warm glow upon the head, and behind, in pursuit of contrasted bleakness, he was now hanging long strips of gray silesia and chilly-coloured linen dustering.

It was wonderful, but——

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Mr. Polly decided that it was time he went in. He found Platt in the silk department, apparently on the verge of another plunge into the exterior world. "Cosy Comfort at Cut Prices," said Polly. "Allittritions Artful Aid."

He did not dare go into the street for the third time, and he was hovering feverishly near the window when he saw the governor, Mr. Garvace—that is to say, the managing director of the Bazaar—walking along the pavement after his manner, to assure himself all was well with the establishment he guided.

Mr. Garvace was a short, stout man, with that air of modest pride that so often goes with corpulence, choleric and decisive in manner, and with hands that looked like bunches of fingers. He was red-haired and ruddy, and after the custom of such complexions, hairs sprang from the tip of his nose. When he wished to bring the power of the human eye to bear upon an assistant, he projected his chest, knitted one brow, and partially closed the left eyelid.

An expression of speculative wonder overspread the countenance of Mr. Polly. He felt he must *see*. Yes, whatever happened, he must *see*.

"Wantospeak to Parsons, Sir," he said to Mr. Mansfield, and deserted his post hastily, dashed through the intervening departments, and was in position behind a pile of Bolton sheeting as the governor came in out of the street.

"What on earth do you think you are doing with that window, Parsons?" began Mr. Garvace.

Only the legs of Parsons and the lower part of his waistcoat and an intervening inch of shirt were visible. He was standing inside the window on the steps, hanging up the last strip of his background from the brass rail along the ceiling. Within, the Manchester shop window was cut off by a partition rather like the partition of an old-fashioned church pew from the general space of the shop. There was a panelled barrier, that is to say, with a little door like a pew door in it. Parsons' face appeared, staring with round eyes at his employer.

Mr. Garvace had to repeat his question.

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"Dressing it, Sir—on new lines."

"Come out of it," said Mr. Garvace.

Parsons stared, and Mr. Garvace had to repeat his command.

Parsons, with a dazed expression, began to descend the steps slowly.

Mr. Garvace turned about. "Where's Morrison? Morrison!"

Morrison appeared.

"Take this window over," said Mr. Garvace, pointing his bunch of fingers at Parsons. "Take all this muddle out and dress it properly."

Morrison advanced and hesitated.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said Parsons, with an immense politeness, "but this is *my* window."

"Take it all out," said Mr. Garvace, turning away.

Morrison advanced. Parsons shut the door with a click that arrested Mr. Garvace.

"Come out of that window," he said. "You can't dress it. If you want to play the fool with a window——"

"This window's All Right," said the genius in window dressing, and there was a little pause.

"Open the door and go right in," said Mr. Garvace to Morrison.

"You leave that door alone, Morrison," said Parsons.

Polly was no longer even trying to hide behind the stack of Bolton sheetings. He realised he was in the presence of forces too stupendous to heed him.

"Get him out," said Mr. Garvace.

Morrison seemed to be thinking out the ethics of his position. The idea of loyalty to his employer prevailed with him. He laid his hand on the door to open it; Parsons tried to disengage his hand. Mr. Garvace joined his effort to Morrison's. Then the heart of Polly leapt, and the world blazed up to wonder and splendour. Parsons disappeared behind the partition for a moment, and reappeared instantly, gripping a thin cylinder of rolled huckaback. With this he smote at Morrison's head. Morrison's head ducked under

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the resounding impact, but he clung on and so did Mr. Garvace. The door came open, and then Mr. Garvace was staggering back, hand to head, his autocratic, his sacred baldness, smitten. Parsons was beyond all control—a strangeness, a marvel. Heaven knows how the artistic struggle had strained that richly endowed temperament. “Say I can’t dress a window, you thundering old Humbug,” he said, and hurled the huckaback at his master. He followed this up by pitching first a blanket, then an armful of silesia, then a window support out of the window into the shop. It leapt into Polly’s mind that Parsons hated his own effort and was glad to demolish it. For a crowded second his attention was concentrated upon Parsons, infuriated, active, like a figure of earthquake with its coat off, shying things headlong.

Then he perceived the back of Mr. Garvace and heard his gubernatorial voice crying to no one in particular and everybody in general, “Get him out of the window. He’s mad. He’s dangerous. Get him out of the window.”

Then a crimson blanket was for a moment over the head of Mr. Garvace, and his voice, muffled for an instant, broke out into unwonted expletive.

Then people had arrived from all parts of the Bazaar. Luck, the ledger clerk, blundered against Polly and said, “Help him!” Somerville from the silks vaulted the counter, and seized a chair by the back. Polly lost his head. He clawed at the Bolton sheeting before him, and if he could have detached a piece he would certainly have hit somebody with it. As it was he simply upset the pile. It fell away from Polly, and he had an impression of somebody squeaking as it went down. It was the sort of impression one disregards. The collapse of the pile of goods just sufficed to end his subconscious efforts to get something to hit somebody with, and his whole attention focussed itself upon the struggle in the window. For a splendid instant Parsons towered up over the active backs that clustered about the shop-window door, an active whirl of gesture, tearing things down and throwing them, and then he went

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under. There was an instant's furious struggle, a crash, a second crash, and the crack of broken plate glass. Then a stillness and heavy breathing.

Parsons was overpowered. . . .

Polly, stepping over scattered pieces of Bolton sheeting, saw his transfigured friend with a dark cut, that was not at present bleeding, on the forehead, one arm held by Somerville and the other by Morrison.

"You-you-you-you annoyed me," said Parsons, sobbing for breath.

The History of Mr. Polly.

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SAILORMEN are not good 'ands at saving money as a rule, said the night-watchman, as he wistfully toyed with a bad shilling on his watch-chain, though to 'ear 'em talk of saving when they're at sea and there isn't a pub within a thousand miles of 'em, you might think different.

It ain't for the want of trying either with some of 'em, and I've known men do all sorts o' things as soon as they was paid off, with a view to saving. I knew one man as used to keep all but a shilling or two in a belt next to 'is skin so that he couldn't get at it easy, but it was all no good. 'E was always running short in the most inconvenient places. I've seen 'im wriggle for five minutes right off, with a tram-car conductor standing over 'im and the other people in the tram reading their papers with one eye and watching 'im with the other.

Ginger Dick and Peter Russet—two men I've spoke of to you afore—tried to save their money once. They'd got so sick and tired of spending it all in p'r'aps a week or ten days arter coming ashore, and 'aving to go to sea agin sooner than they'd intended, that they determined some way or other to 'ave things different.

They was homeward bound on a steamer from Melbourne when they made their minds up; and Isaac Lunn, the oldest fireman aboard—a very steady old teetotaler—gave them a lot of good advice about it. They all wanted to rejoin the ship when she sailed agin, and 'e offered to take a room ashore with them and mind their money, giving 'em what 'e called a moderate amount each day.

They would ha' laughed at any other man, but they knew that old Isaac was as honest as could be and that their

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money would be safe with 'im, and at last, after a lot of palaver, they wrote out a paper saying as they were willing for 'im to 'ave their money and give it to 'em bit by bit, till they went to sea agin.

Anybody but Ginger Dick and Peter Russet or a fool would ha' known better than to do such a thing, but old Isaac 'ad got such a oily tongue and seemed so fair-minded about what 'e called moderate drinking that they never thought wot they was letting themselves in for, and when they took their pay—close on sixteen pounds each—they put the odd change in their pockets and 'anded the rest over to 'im.

The first day they was as pleased as Punch. Old Isaac got a nice, respectable bedroom for them all, and arter they'd 'ad a few drinks they humored 'im by 'aving a nice 'ot cup o' tea, and then goin' off with 'im to see a magic-lantern performance.

It was called "The Drunkard's Downfall," and it began with a young man going into a nice-looking pub and being served by a nice-looking barmaid with a glass of ale. Then it got on to 'arf pints and pints in the next picture, and arter Ginger 'ad seen the lost young man put away six pints in about 'arf a minute, 'e got such a raging thirst on 'im that 'e couldn't sit still, and 'e whispered to Peter Russet to go out with 'im.

"You'll lose the best of it if you go now," ses old Isaac, in a whisper; "in the next picture there's little frogs and devils sitting on the edge of the pot as 'e goes to drink."

Ginger Dick got up and nodded to Peter.

"Arter that 'e kills 'is mother with a razor," ses old Isaac, pleading with 'im and 'olding on to 'is coat.

Ginger Dick sat down agin, and when the murder was over 'e said it made 'im feel faint, and 'im and Peter Russet went out for a breath of fresh air. They 'ad three at the first place, and then they moved on to another and forgot all about Isaac and the dissolving views until ten o'clock, when Ginger, who 'ad been very liberal to some friends 'e'd made in a pub, found 'e'd spent 'is last penny.

"This comes o' listening to a parcel o' teetotalers," 'e ses,

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very cross, when 'e found that Peter 'ad spent all 'is money too. "Here we are just beginning the evening and not a farthing in our pockets."

They went off 'ome in a very bad temper. Old Isaac was asleep in 'is bed, and when they woke 'im up and said that they was going to take charge of their money themselves 'e kept dropping off to sleep agin and snoring that 'ard they could scarcely 'ear themselves speak. Then Peter tipped Ginger a wink and pointed to Isaac's trousers, which were 'anging over the foot of the bed.

Ginger Dick smiled and took 'em up softly, and Peter Russet smiled too ; but 'e wasn't best pleased to see old Isaac a-smiling in 'is sleep, as though 'e was 'aving amusing dreams. All Ginger found was a ha'penny, a bunch o' keys, and a cough lozenge. In the coat and waistcoat 'e found a few tracks folded up, a broken pen-knife, a ball of string, and some other rubbish. Then 'e set down on the foot o' the bed and made eyes over at Peter.

"Wake 'im up agin," ses Peter, in a temper.

Ginger Dick got up and, leaning over the bed, took old Isaac by the shoulders and shook 'im as if 'e'd been a bottle o' medicine.

"Time to get up, lads ? " ses old Isaac, putting one leg out o' bed.

"No, it ain't," ses Ginger, very rough ; "we ain't been to bed yet. We want our money back."

Isaac drew 'is leg back into bed agin. "Goo' night," he ses, and fell fast asleep.

"'E's shamming, that's wot 'e is," ses Peter Russet. "Let's look for it. It must be in the room somewhere."

They turned the room upside down pretty near, and then Ginger Dick struck a match and looked up the chimney, but all 'e found was that it 'adn't been swept for about twenty years, and wot with temper and soot 'e looked so frightful that Peter was arf afraid of 'im.

"I've 'ad enough of this," ses Ginger, running up to the bed and 'olding his sooty fist under old Isaac's nose. "Now, then, where's that money ? If you don't give us our money,

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our 'ard-earned money, inside o' two minutes, I'll break every bone in your body."

"This is wot comes o' trying to do you a favour, Ginger," ses the old man, reproachfully.

"Don't talk to me," ses Ginger, "cos I won't have it. Come on; where is it?"

Old Isaac looked at 'im, and then 'e gave a sigh and got up and put on 'is boots and 'is trousers.

"I thought I should 'ave a little trouble with you," 'e ses, slowly, "but I was prepared for that."

"You'll 'ave more if you don't 'urry up," ses Ginger, glaring at 'im.

"We don't want to 'urt you, Isaac," ses Peter Russet, "we on'y want our money."

"I know that," ses Isaac; "you keep still, Peter, and see fair-play, and I'll knock you silly arterwards."

'E pushed some o' the things into a corner and then 'e spat on 'is 'ands, and began to prance up and down, and duck 'is 'ead about and 'it the air in a way that surprised 'em.

"I ain't 'it a man for five years," 'e ses, still dancing up and down—"fighting's sinful except in a good cause—but afore I got a new 'art, Ginger, I'd lick three men like you afore breakfast, just to git up a appetite."

"Look 'ere," ses Ginger; "you're an old man and I don't want to 'urt you; tell us where our money is, our 'ard-earned money, and I won't lay a finger on you."

"I'm taking care of it for you," ses the old man.

Ginger Dick gave a howl and rushed at him, and the next moment Isaac's fist shot out and give 'im a drive that sent 'im spinning across the room until 'e fell in a heap in the fireplace. It was like a kick from a 'orse, and Peter looked very serious as 'e picked 'im up and dusted 'im down.

"You should keep your eye on 'is fist," 'e ses, sharply.

It was a silly thing to say, seeing that that was just wot 'ad 'appened, and Ginger told 'im wot 'e'd do for 'im when 'e'd finished with Isaac. He went at the old man agin, but 'e never 'ad a chance, and in about three minutes 'e was very glad to let Peter 'elp 'im into bed.

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"It's your turn to fight 'im now, Peter," he ses. "Just move this pillar so as I can see."

"Come on, lad," ses the old man.

Peter shook 'is 'ead. "I 'ave no wish to 'urt you, Isaac," he ses, kindly; "excitement like fighting is dangerous for an old man. Give us our money and we'll say no more about it."

"No, my lads," ses Isaac. "I've undertook to take charge o' this money and I'm going to do it; and I 'ope that when we all sign on aboard the *Planet* there'll be a matter o' twelve pounds each left. Now, I don't want to be 'arsh with you, but I'm going back to bed, and if I 'ave to get up and dress agin you'll wish yourselves dead."

'E went back to bed agin, and Peter, taking no notice of Ginger Dick, who kept calling 'im a coward, got into bed alongside of Ginger and fell fast asleep.

They all 'ad breakfast in a coffee-shop next morning, and arter it was over Ginger, who 'adn't spoke a word till then, said that 'e and Peter Russet wanted a little money to go on with. 'E said they preferred to get their meals alone, as Isaac's face took their appetite away.

"Very good," ses the old man. "I don't want to force my company on nobody," and after thinking 'ard for a minute or two 'e put 'is 'and in 'is trouser-pocket and gave them eighteenpence each.

"Wot's this for?" ses Ginger, staring at the money. "Matches?"

"That's your day's allowance," ses Isaac, "and it's plenty. There's ninepence for your dinner, fourpence for your tea, and twopence for a crust o' bread and cheese for supper. And if you must go and drown yourselves in beer, that leaves threepence each to go and do it with."

Ginger tried to speak to 'im, but 'is feelings was too much for 'im, and 'e couldn't. Then Peter Russet swallowed something 'e was going to say and asked old Isaac very perlite to make it a quid for 'im because 'e was going down to Colchester to see 'is mother, and 'e didn't want to go empty-'anded.

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"You're a good son, Peter," ses old Isaac, "and I wish there was more like you. I'll come down with you, if you like ; I've got nothing to do."

Peter said it was very kind of 'im, but 'e'd sooner go alone, owing to 'is mother being very shy afore strangers.

"Well, I'll come down to the station and take a ticket for you," ses Isaac.

Then Peter lost 'is temper altogether, and banged 'is fist on the table and smashed 'arf the crockery. 'E asked Isaac whether 'e thought 'im and Ginger Dick was a couple o' children, and 'e said if 'e didn't give 'em all their money right away 'e'd give 'im in charge to the first policeman they met.

"I'm afraid you didn't intend for to go and see your mother, Peter," ses the old man.

"Look 'ere," ses Peter, "are you going to give us that money ?"

"Not if you went down on your bended knees," ses the old man.

"Very good," ses Peter, getting up and walking outside ; "then come along o' me to find a policeman."

"I'm agreeable," said Isaac, "but I've got the paper you signed."

Peter said 'e didn't care twopence if 'e'd got fifty papers, and they walked along looking for a policeman, which was a very unusual thing for them to do.

"I 'ope for your sakes it won't be the same policeman that you and Ginger Dick set on in Gun Alley the night afore you shipped on the *Planet*," ses Isaac, pursing up 'is lips.

"'Tain't likely to be," ses Peter, beginning to wish 'e 'adn't been so free with 'is tongue.

"Still, if I tell 'im, I dessay 'e'll soon find 'im," ses Isaac ; "there's one coming along now, Peter ; shall I stop 'im ?"

Peter Russet looked at 'im and then 'e looked at Ginger, and they walked by grinding their teeth. They stuck to Isaac all day, trying to get their money out of 'im, and the names they called 'im was a surprise even to themselves.

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And at night they turned the room topsy-turvy agin looking for their money, and 'ad more unpleasantness when they wanted Isaac to get up and let 'em search the bed.

They 'ad breakfast together agin next morning, and Ginger tried another tack. 'E spoke quite nice to Isaac, and 'ad three large cups o' tea to show 'im 'ow 'e was beginning to like it, and when the old man gave 'em their eighteenpences 'e smiled and said 'e'd like a few shillings extra that day.

"It'll be all right, Isaac," he ses. "I wouldn't 'ave a drink if you asked me to. Don't seem to care for it now. I was saying so to you on'y last night, wasn't I, Peter?"

"You was," said Peter; "so was I."

"Then I've done you good, Ginger," ses Isaac, clapping 'im on the back.

"You 'ave," ses Ginger, speaking between his teeth, "and I thank you for it. I don't want drink; but I thought of going to a music-'all this evening."

"Going to a *wot*?" ses old Isaac, drawing 'imself up and looking very shocked.

"A music-'all," ses Ginger, trying to keep 'is temper.

"A music-'all?" ses Isaac; "why, it's worse than a pub, Ginger. I should be a very poor friend o' yours if I let you go there—I couldn't think of it."

"Wot's it got to do with you, you grey-whiskered serpent?" screams Ginger, 'arf mad with rage. "Why don't you leave us alone? Why don't you mind your own business? It's our money."

Isaac tried to talk to 'im, but 'e wouldn't listen, and 'e made such a fuss that at last the coffee-shop keeper told 'im to go outside. Peter follered 'im out, and being very upset they went and spent their day's allowance in the first hour, and then they walked about the streets quarrelling as to the death they'd like old Isaac to 'ave when 'is time came.

They went back to their lodgings at dinner-time; but there was no sign of the old man, and, being 'ungry and thirsty, they took all their spare clothes to a pawnbroker, and got enough money to go on with. Just to show their independence they went to two music-'alls, and with a sort

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of an idea that they was doing Isaac a bad turn they spent every farthing afore they got 'ome, and sat up in bed telling 'im about the spree they'd 'ad.

At five o'clock in the morning Peter woke up and saw, to 'is surprise, that Ginger Dick was dressed and carefully folding up old Isaac's clothes. At first 'e thought that Ginger 'ad gone mad, taking care of the old man's things like that, but afore 'e could speak Ginger noticed that 'e was awake, and stepped over to 'im and whispered to 'im to dress without making a noise. Peter did as 'e was told, and, more puzzled than ever, saw Ginger make up all the old man's clothes in a bundle and creep out of the room on tiptoe.

"Going to 'ide 'is clothes?" 'e ses.

"Yes," ses Ginger, leading the way downstairs; "in a pawnshop. We'll make the old man pay for to-day's amusements."

Then Peter saw the joke, and 'e begun to laugh so 'ard that Ginger 'ad to threaten to knock 'is 'ead off to quiet 'im. Ginger laughed 'imself when they got outside, and at last, arter walking about till the shops opened, they got into a pawnbroker's and put old Isaac's clothes up for fifteen shillings.

First thing they did was to 'ave a good breakfast, and after that they came out smiling all over and began to spend a 'appy day. Ginger was in tip-top spirits, and so was Peter, and the idea that old Isaac was in bed while they was drinking 'is clothes pleased them more than anything. Twice that evening policemen spoke to Ginger for dancing on the pavement, and by the time the money was spent it took Peter all 'is time to get 'im 'ome.

Old Isaac was in bed when they got there, and the temper 'e was in was shocking; but Ginger sat on 'is bed and smiled at 'im as if 'e was saying compliments to 'im.

"Where's my clothes?" ses the old man, shaking 'is fist at the two of 'em.

Ginger smiled at 'im, then 'e shut 'is eyes and dropped off to sleep.

"Where's my clothes?" ses Isaac, turning to Peter.

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"Closhe?" says Peter, staring at 'im.

"Where are they?" ses Isaac.

It was a long time afore Peter could understand wot 'e meant, but as soon as 'e did 'e started to look for 'em. Drink takes people in different ways, and the way it always took Peter was to make 'im one o' the most obliging men that ever lived. 'E spent 'arf the night crawling about on all fours looking for the clothes, and four or five times old Isaac woke up from dreams of earthquakes to find Peter 'ad got jammed under 'is bed, and was wondering what 'ad 'appened to 'im.

None of 'em was in the best o' tempers when they woke up next morning, and Ginger 'ad 'ardly got 'is eyes open before Isaac was asking 'im about 'is clothes agin.

"Don't bother me about your clothes," ses Ginger; "talk about something else for a change."

"Where are they?" ses Isaac, sitting on the edge of 'is bed.

Ginger yawned and felt in 'is waistcoat pocket—for neither of 'em 'ad undressed—and then 'e took the pawn-ticket out and threw it on the floor. Isaac picked it up, and then 'e began to dance about the room as if 'e'd gone mad.

"Do you mean to tell me you've pawned my clothes?" he shouts.

"Me and Peter did," ses Ginger, sitting up in bed and getting ready for a row.

Isaac dropped on the bed agin all of a 'eap. "And wot am I to do?" he ses.

"If you be'ave yourself," ses Ginger, "and give us our money, me and Peter'll go and get 'em out agin. When we've 'ad breakfast, that is. There's no 'urry."

"But I 'aven't got the money," ses Isaac; "it was all sewn up in the lining of the coat. I've on'y got about five shillings. You've made a nice mess of it, Ginger, you 'ave."

"You're a silly fool, Ginger, that's wot you are," ses Peter.

"*Sewn up in the lining of the coat?*" ses Ginger, staring.

"The bank-notes was," ses Isaac, "and three pounds in gold 'idden in the cap. Did you pawn that too?"

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Ginger got up in 'is excitement and walked up and down the room. "We must go and get 'em out at once," 'e ses.

"And where's the money to do it with?" ses Peter.

Ginger 'adn't thought of that, and it struck 'im all of a 'eap. None of 'em seemed to be able to think of a way of getting the other ten shillings wot was wanted, and Ginger was so upset that 'e took no notice of the things Peter kept saying to 'im.

"Let's go and ask to see 'em, and say we left a railway-ticket in the pocket," ses Peter.

Isaac shook 'is 'ead. "There's on'y one way to do it," 'e ses. "We shall 'ave to pawn your clothes, Ginger, to get mine out with."

"That's the on'y way, Ginger," ses Peter, brightening up. "Now, wot's the good o' carrying on like that? It's no worse for you to be without your clothes for a little while than it was for pore old Isaac."

It took 'em quite 'arf an hour afore they could get Ginger to see it. First of all 'e wanted Peter's clothes to be took instead of 'is, and when Peter pointed out that they was too shabby to fetch ten shillings 'e 'ad a lot o' nasty things to say about wearing such old rags, and at last, in a terrible temper, 'e took 'is clothes off and pitched 'em in a 'eap on the floor.

"If you ain't back in 'arf an hour, Peter," 'e ses, scowling at 'im, "you'll 'ear from me, I can tell you."

"Don't you worry about that," ses Isaac, with a smile. "*I'm* going to take 'em."

"You?" ses Ginger; "but you can't. You ain't got no clothes."

"I'm going to wear Peter's," ses Isaac, with another smile.

Peter asked 'im to listen to reason, but it was all no good. 'E'd got the pawn-ticket, and at last Peter, forgetting all 'e'd said to Ginger Dick about using bad langwidge, took 'is clothes off, one by one, and dashed 'em on the floor, and told Isaac some of the things 'e thought of 'im.

The old man didn't take any notice of 'im. 'E dressed 'imself up very slow and careful in Peter's clothes, and then 'e drove 'em nearly crazy by wasting time making 'is bed.

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"Be as quick as you can, Isaac," ses Ginger, at last ; "think of us two a-sitting 'ere waiting for you."

"I sha'n't forget it," ses Isaac, and 'e came back to the door after 'e'd gone 'arf-way down the stairs to ask 'em not to go out on the drink while 'e was away.

It was nine o'clock when 'e went, and at ha'-past nine Ginger began to get impatient and wondered wot 'ad 'appened to 'im, and when ten o'clock came and no Isaac they was both leaning out of the winder with blankets over their shoulders looking up the road. By eleven o'clock Peter was in very low spirits and Ginger was so mad 'e was afraid to speak to 'im.

They spent the rest o' that day 'anging out of the winder, but it was not till ha'-past four in the afternoon that Isaac, still wearing Peter's clothes and carrying a couple of large green plants under 'is arm, turned into the road, and from the way 'e was smiling they thought it must be all right.

"Wot 'ave you been such a long time for?" ses Ginger, in a low, fierce voice, as Isaac stopped underneath the winder and nodded up to 'em.

"I met an old friend," ses Isaac.

"Met an old friend?" ses Ginger, in a passion. "Wot d'ye mean, wasting time like that while we was sitting up 'ere waiting and starving?"

"I 'adn't seen him for years," ses Isaac, "and time slipped away afore I noticed it."

"I dessay," ses Ginger, in a bitter voice. "Well, is the money all right?"

"I don't know," ses Isaac ; "I ain't got the clothes."

"Wot?" ses Ginger, nearly falling out of the winder. "Well, wot 'ave you done with mine, then? Where are they? Come upstairs."

"I won't come upstairs, Ginger," ses Isaac, "because I'm not quite sure whether I've done right. But I'm not used to going into pawnshops, and I walked about trying to make up my mind to go in and couldn't."

"Well, wot did you do then?" ses Ginger, 'ardly able to contain 'isself.

THE MONEY BOX

"While I was trying to make up my mind," ses old Isaac, "I see a man with a barrer of lovely plants. 'E wasn't asking money for 'em, only old clothes."

"*Old clothes?*" ses Ginger, in a voice as if 'e was being suffocated.

"I thought they'd be a bit o' green for you to look at," ses the old man, 'olding the plants up; "there's no knowing 'ow long you'll be up there. The big one is yours, Ginger, and the other is for Peter."

"'Ave you gone mad, Isaac?" ses Peter, in a trembling voice, arter Ginger 'ad tried to speak and couldn't.

Isaac shook 'is 'ead and smiled up at 'em, and then, arter telling Peter to put Ginger's blanket a little more round 'is shoulders, for fear 'e should catch cold, 'e said 'e'd ask the landlady to send 'em up some bread and butter and a cup o' tea.

They 'eard 'im talking to the landlady at the door, and then 'e went off in a hurry without looking behind 'im, and the landlady walked up and down on the other side of the road with 'er apron stuffed in 'er mouth, pretending to be looking at 'er chimney-pots.

Isaac didn't turn up at all that night, and by next morning those two unfortunate men see 'ow they'd been done. It was quite plain to them that Isaac 'ad been deceiving them, and Peter was pretty certain that 'e took the money out of the bed while 'e was fussing about making it. Old Isaac kept 'em there for three days, sending 'em in their clothes bit by bit and two shillings a day to live on; but they didn't set eyes on 'im agin until they all signed on aboard the *Planet*, and they didn't set eyes on their money until they was two miles below Gravesend.

Odd Craft.

STEPHEN LEACOCK

1869—

49...THE CAVE-MAN AS HE IS

I THINK it likely that few people besides myself have ever actually seen and spoken with a "cave-man."

Yet everybody nowadays knows all about the cave-man. The fifteen-cent magazines and the new fiction have made him a familiar figure. A few years ago, it is true, nobody had ever heard of him. But lately, for some reason or other, there has been a run on the cave-man. No up-to-date story is complete without one or two references to him. The hero, when the heroine slights him, is said to "feel for a moment the wild, primordial desire of the cave-man, the longing to seize her, to drag her with him, to carry her away, to make her his." When he takes her in his arms it is recorded that "all the elemental passion of the cave-man surges through him." When he fights, on her behalf, against a dray-man or a gun-man or an ice-man or any other compound that makes up a modern villain, he is said to "feel all the fierce fighting joy of the cave-man." If they kick him in the ribs, he likes it. If they beat him over the head, he never feels it; because he is, for the moment, a cave-man. And the cave-man is, and is known to be, quite above sensation.

The heroine, too, shares the same point of view. "Take me," she murmurs as she falls into the hero's embrace, "be my cave-man." As she says it there is, so the writer assures us, something of the fierce light of the cave-woman in her eyes, the primordial woman to be wooed and won only by force.

So, like everybody else, I had, till I saw him, a great idea of the cave-man. I had a clear mental picture of him—

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huge, brawny, muscular, a wolfskin thrown about him and a great war-club in his hand. I knew him as without fear, with nerves untouched by our effete civilization, fighting, as the beasts fight, to the death, killing without pity and suffering without a moan.

It was a picture that I could not but admire.

I liked, too—I am free to confess it—his peculiar way with women. His system was, as I understood it, to take them by the neck and bring them along with him. That was his fierce, primordial way of “wooing” them. And they liked it. So at least we are informed by a thousand credible authorities. They liked it. And the modern woman, so we are told, would still like it if only one dared to try it on. There’s the trouble ; if one only *dared* !

I see lots of them—I’ll be frank about it—that I should like to grab, to sling over my shoulder and carry away with me ; or, what is the same thing, allowing for modern conditions, have an express man carry them. I notice them at Atlantic City, I see them in Fifth Avenue—yes, everywhere.

But would they come ? That’s the *deuce* of it. Would they come right along, like the cave-woman, merely biting off my ear as they came, or are they degenerate enough to bring an action against me, indicting the express company as a party of the second part ?

Doubts such as these prevent me from taking active measures. But they leave me, as they leave many another man, preoccupied and fascinated with the cave-man.

One may imagine, then, my extraordinary interest in him when I actually met him in the flesh. Yet the thing came about quite simply, indeed more by accident than by design, an adventure open to all.

It so happened that I spent my vacation in Kentucky—the region, as everybody knows, of the great caves. They extend—it is a matter of common knowledge—for hundreds of miles ; in some places dark and sunless tunnels, the black silence broken only by the dripping of the water from the roof ; in other places great vaults like subterranean temples, with vast stone arches sweeping to the dome, and with deep,

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still water of unfathomed depth as the floor ; and here and there again they are lighted from above through rifts in the surface of the earth, and are dry and sand strewn—fit for human habitation.

In such caves as these—so has the obstinate legend run for centuries—there still dwell cave-men, the dwindling remnant of their race. And here it was that I came across him.

I had penetrated into the caves far beyond my guides. I carried a revolver and had with me an electric lantern, but the increasing sunlight in the cave as I went on had rendered the latter needless.

There he sat, a huge figure, clad in a great wolfskin. Besides him lay a great club. Across his knee was a spear round which he was binding sinews that tightened under his muscular hand. His head was bent over his task. His matted hair had fallen over his eyes. He did not see me till I was close beside him on the sanded floor of the cave. I gave a slight cough.

“Excuse me !” I said.

The Cave-man gave a startled jump.

“My goodness,” he said, “you startled me !”

I could see that he was quite trembling.

“You came along so suddenly,” he said, “it gave me the jumps.” Then he muttered, more to himself than to me, “Too much of this darned cave-water ! I must quit drinking it.”

I sat down near to the Cave-man on a stone, taking care to place my revolver carefully behind it. I don’t mind admitting that a loaded revolver, especially as I get older, makes me nervous. I was afraid that he might start fooling with it. One can’t be too careful.

As a way of opening conversation I picked up the Cave-man’s club.

“Say,” I said, “that’s a great club you have, eh ? By gee ! it’s heavy !”

“Look out !” said the Cave-man with a certain agitation in his voice as he reached out and took the club from me.

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"Don't fool with that club ! It's loaded ! You know you could easily drop the club on your toes, or on mine. A man can't be too careful with a loaded club."

He rose as he said this and carried the club to the other side of the cave, where he leant it against the wall. Now that he stood up and I could examine him he no longer looked so big. In fact he was not big at all. The effect of size must have come, I think, from the great wolfskin that he wore. I have noticed the same thing in Grand Opera. I noticed, too, for the first time that the cave we were in seemed fitted up, in a rude sort of way, like a dwelling-room.

"This is a nice place you've got," I said.

"Dandy, isn't it ?" he said, as he cast his eyes around. "*She* fixed it up. *She's* got great taste. See that mud side-board ? That's the real thing, A-one mud ! None of your cheap rock about that. We fetched that mud for two miles to make that. And look at that wicker bucket. Isn't it great ? Hardly leaks at all except through the sides, and perhaps a little through the bottom. *She* wove that. *She's* a humdinger at weaving."

He was moving about as he spoke, showing me all his little belongings. He reminded me for all the world of a man in a Harlem flat, showing a visitor how convenient it all is. Somehow, too, the Cave-man had lost all appearance of size. He looked, in fact, quite little, and when he had pushed his long hair back from his forehead he seemed to wear that same, worried, apologetic look that we all have. To a higher being, if there is such, our little faces one and all appear, no doubt, pathetic.

I knew that he must be speaking about his wife.

"Where is she ?" I asked.

"My wife ?" he said. "Oh, she's gone out somewhere through the caves with the kid. You didn't meet our kid as you came along, did you ? No ? Well, he's the greatest boy you ever saw. He was only two this nineteenth of August. And you should hear him say 'Pop' and 'Mom' just as if he was grown up. He is really, I think, about the brightest boy I've ever known—I mean quite apart from

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being his father, and speaking of him as if he were anyone else's boy. You didn't meet them?"

"No," I said, "I didn't."

"Oh, well," the Cave-man went on, "there are lots of ways and passages through. I guess they went in another direction. The wife generally likes to take a stroll round in the morning and see some of the neighbours. But, say," he interrupted, "I guess I'm forgetting my manners. Let me get you a drink of cave-water. Here, take it in this stone mug! There you are, say when! Where do we get it? Oh, we find it in parts of the cave where it filters through the soil above. Alcoholic? Oh, yes, about fifteen per cent, I think. Some say it soaks all through the soil of this State. Sit down and be comfortable, and, say, if you hear the woman coming just slip your mug behind that stone out of sight. Do you mind? Now, try one of these elm-root cigars. Oh, pick a good one—there are lots of them!"

We seated ourselves in some comfort on the soft sand, our backs against the boulders, sipping cave-water and smoking elm-root cigars. It seemed altogether as if one were back in civilization, talking to a genial host.

"Yes," said the Cave-man, and he spoke, as it were, in a large and patronizing way. "I generally let my wife trot about as she likes in the daytime. She and the other women nowadays are getting up all these different movements, and the way I look at it is that if it amuses her to run around and talk and attend meetings, why let her do it. Of course," he continued, assuming a look of great firmness, "if I liked to put my foot down——"

"Exactly, exactly," I said. "It's the same way with us!"

"Is it now!" he questioned with interest. "I had imagined that it was all different Outside. You're from the Outside, aren't you? I guessed you must be from the skins you wear."

"Have you never been Outside?" I asked.

"No fear!" said the Cave-man. "Not for mine! Down here in the caves, clean underground and mostly in

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the dark, it's all right. It's nice and safe." He gave a sort of shudder. "Gee! You fellows out there must have your nerve to go walking around like that on the outside rim of everything, where the stars might fall on you or a thousand things happen to you. But then you Outside Men have got a natural elemental fearlessness about you that we Cave-men have lost. I tell you, I was pretty scared when I looked up and saw you standing there."

"Had you never seen any Outside Men?" I asked.

"Why, yes," he answered, "but never close. The most I've done is to go out to the edges of the cave sometimes and look out and see them, Outside Men and Women, in the distance. But, of course, in one way or another, we Cave-men know all about them. And the thing we envy most in you Outside Men is the way you treat your women! By gee! You take no nonsense from them—you fellows are the real primordial, primitive men. We've lost it somehow."

"Why, my dear fellow——" I began.

But the Cave-man, who had sat suddenly upright, interrupted.

"Quick! quick!" he said. "Hide that infernal mug! She's coming. Don't you hear!"

As he spoke I caught the sound of a woman's voice somewhere in the outer passages of the cave.

"Now, Willie," she was saying, speaking evidently to the Cave-child, "you come right along back with me, and if I ever catch you getting in such a mess as that again I'll never take you anywhere, so there!"

Her voice had grown louder. She entered the cave as she spoke—a big-boned woman in a suit of skins leading by the hand a pathetic little mite in a rabbit-skin, with blue eyes and a slobbered face.

But as I was sitting the Cave-woman evidently couldn't see me; for she turned at once to speak to her husband, unconscious of my presence.

"Well, of all the idle creatures!" she exclaimed. "Loafing here in the sand"—she gave a sniff—"and smoking——!"

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"My dear," began the Cave-man.

"Don't you my-dear me!" she answered. "Look at this place! Nothing tidied up yet and the day half through! Did you put the alligator on to boil?"

"I was just going to say——" began the Cave-man.

"*Going* to say! Yes, I don't doubt you were going to say. You'd go on saying all day if I'd let you. What I'm asking you is, is the alligator on to boil for dinner or is it not—— My gracious!" She broke off all of a sudden, as she caught sight of me. "Why didn't you say there was company? Land sakes! And you sit there and never say there was a gentleman here!"

She had hustled across the cave and was busily arranging her hair with a pool of water as a mirror.

"Gracious!" she said, "I'm a perfect fright! You must excuse me," she added, looking round toward me, "for being in this state. I'd just slipped on this old fur blouse and run around to a neighbour's and I'd no idea that he was going to bring in company. Just like him! I'm afraid we've nothing but a plain alligator stoo to offer you, but I'm sure if you'll stay to dinner——"

She was hustling about already, good primitive housewife that she was, making the stone-plates rattle on the mud table.

"Why, really——" I began. But I was interrupted by a sudden exclamation from both the Cave-man and the Cave-woman together:

"Willie! where's Willie!"

"Gracious!" cried the woman. "He's wandered out alone—oh, hurry, look for him! Something might get him! He may have fallen in the water! Oh, hurry!"

They were off in a moment, shouting into the dark passages of the outer cave: "Willie! Willie!" There was agonized anxiety in their voices.

And then in a moment, as it seemed, they were back again, with Willie in their arms, blubbering, his rabbit-skin all wet.

"Goodness gracious!" said the Cave-woman. "He'd fallen right in, the poor little man. Hurry, dear, and get

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something dry to wrap him in ! Goodness, what a fright ! Quick, darling, give me something to rub him with."

Anxiously the Cave-parents moved about beside the child, all quarrel vanished.

" But surely," I said, as they calmed down a little, " just there where Willie fell in, beside the passage that I came through, there is only three inches of water."

" So there is," they said, both together, " but just suppose it had been three feet ! "

Later on, when Willie was restored, they both renewed their invitation to me to stay to dinner.

" Didn't you say," said the Cave-man, " that you wanted to make some notes on the difference between Cave-people and the people of your world of to-day ? "

" I thank you," I answered, " I have already all the notes I want ! "

Frenzied Fiction.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

1894-

50...INIGO JOLLIFANT QUOTES SHAKESPEARE AND DEPARTS IN THE NIGHT

[Inigo Jollifant is an assistant master at Washbury Manor School. "It is some years since James Tarvin, M.A. (Cantab.) married a woman ten years older than himself, bought with her money the desirable property known as Washbury Manor, and transformed it into Washbury Manor School, in which fifty or sixty boys, preferably the sons of gentlemen, are prepared for the public schools and whatever else may befall them in this life." Washbury Manor is not a bad school; but, on the other hand, it is certainly not one of the best. Mr. Tarvin has a teaching staff of "three university graduates, Robert Fauntley, M.A. (Oxon.), Inigo Jollifant, B.A. (Cantab.), Harold Felton, B.A. (Bristol); a matron, Miss Callander, with a diploma in the domestic sciences; and an ex-regular non-commissioned officer, Sergeant Comrie, to take drill and carpentering. Moreover, the health and comfort of the boys are the care of no less a person than Mrs. Tarvin herself, the daughter of the Rev. George Betterby."—It is Inigo's birthday, and he is giving a little birthday party to celebrate the event. The other revellers are Fauntley and Felton.]

"HAVING drunk your health, Jollifant," said Fauntley, his fingers closing round the bottle of Old Rob Roy, "I will now proceed to give you a little good advice." He spoke in that unusually careful and dignified manner often found in men who have just accounted for half a bottle of whisky and are busy pouring out the other half.

This was Monday night and the little birthday party. The revellers had the place to themselves, for the Tarvins were dining out and Miss Callander had retired early, to rest her ankle. Indeed, the tiny common room, which had sufficient haze of smoke and reek of Old Rob Roy to be a highland den, seemed to have removed itself altogether from Washbury

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Manor. Perhaps one of the trio, Felton, can hardly be described as a reveller. He did not like whisky and was secretly troubled all the time by the thought of what his companions might say or do under its influence, but being a good-natured and gregarious youth, he did his best, by drowning his tots of liquor in soda water and then taking blind gulps at the stuff, by smoking quite a number of his non-nicotine cigarettes, by laughing whenever the others laughed, to be one of the party. And perhaps Fauntley, who was there to deal justly with the Old Rob Roy, did not quite succeed in revelling. With Inigo himself, however, there can be no such reservations. He was there to do the honours, to drink with and beam upon his companions in misfortune, to forget, to expand. He was not really very fond of whisky but already he had had a great deal more of it than he was accustomed to, and now his lock of hair seemed longer and more troublesome than usual and his smile a trifle broader, his gestures had a certain amplitude and nobility, and his spirit, discovering again the enchanted richness of life, was taking wing.

"But before I give you this advice," Fauntley continued, "I should like to ask you a few questions, in what is—you must understand, Jollifant—a purely friendly spirit. No discourtesy is intended." He brought out these remarks with the care of a pleading K.C. In a few more glasses' time, he would stand at the familiar cross-roads, being compelled to go one way and discuss his lost position in the Church and the decay of civilisation or to go the other way and talk bawdy. At the moment, however, he was still free and so was enjoying his capacity to choose, develop, expand, any theme. "My first question is this. Have you any money?"

"About two pound ten," replied Inigo.

"No, not actual money, cash in hand, but means, income, capital."

"Oh, that! I've a private income of about sixty pounds per annum, derived, gentlemen, from investments. One is the Western Gas Company, and the other the Shuttlebury

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Bag and Portmanteau Corporation. I may add that the Bags and Portmanteaus are a bit rocky."

"Very well. You can't live on that, can you? Still, it's something," said Fauntley, examining the stem of his pipe with great gravity. "My next question is this. What about your people? Have you any expectations? Have you anybody dependent on you?"

"Neither." Inigo took up his glass. "I am, my friends, a man without family. You see before you a Norphan. As a matter of fact, I've an uncle—he's in the tea trade and lives at Dulwich—who sort of helped to bring me up until I left Cambridge. I was staying with him during the Long. He's a pleasant old stick and the only man I know what still wears a straw hat."

"I know a man who wears one in winter," Felton put in modestly.

"Have another drink, Felton," said Inigo, pushing across the bottle. "In winter, too, eh? There's more in you than meets the eye. An all-the-year-round-bounder, eh? I must tell my uncle that; he'll be furious. But where does this lead us, to what dark clue, Fauntley?"

"My advice to you, Jollifant, is this. Get out of this place. You're only wasting your time. You don't like it, and I don't think it likes you." Fauntley emptied his glass and relit his pipe. "I don't mean go to another school. There are plenty of prep schools better than Washbury, much better, and there are some worse. I've known one or two a damned sight worse."

"You stagger me," cried Inigo.

"Well, I don't know," said Felton, "I've heard of schools——" But what he had heard was never revealed because his troubled piping was completely drowned by Fauntley's heavy bass.

"When all's said and done, these prep schools are not your damned Board or Council schools or whatever they call 'em now—reading and writing factories. A gentleman can still teach in 'em. Don't forget that, you youngsters. These are the only places left for a gentleman."

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"No doubt," observed Inigo sadly. "But it's pretty ghastly being a gentleman, isn't it?"

"It's nearly played out," said Fauntley. "And so, by the way, is this bottle. There's another somewhere, isn't there, Jollifant?"

"There is, and I'll open it. But what am I to do when I get out?"

"Well, of course, that's your affair," said Fauntley, who seemed to think that up to this time the conversation had been on some public question, and had all the appearance of a man who had successfully settled it. "I don't pretend to know about these things. But you write a little, don't you? Why don't you become a journalist?"

"Because I was born at least thirty years too late," replied Inigo. "Now if I'd been writing in Henley's time——"

"Good feller, Henley!" Fauntley ejaculated this with such an air that the wondering Felton, who only knew Henley as the man who was captain of his soul, thought the two must have been at Oxford together.

"I could have done something," Inigo pursued wistfully. "It's too late now, though. Why, I'm working at a thing now, an essay on *The Last Knapsack*—about walking tours, you know—that Henley would have jumped at. But I'm absolutely certain," he added, with prophetic truth, "that there isn't a paper in the country would take it now. No, I've thought about that, and it's useless. Some day, perhaps, I may——" And he finished the sentence with a graceful gesture; that, no doubt, of a man accepting or refusing several wreaths of laurel.

"That's no good then," said Fauntley so heartily as to be almost brutal. "What else is there? Of course you're devilish clever at the piano—I've heard you—always reminds me of a feller who was up at Merton in my time. He was the cleverest feller I ever heard at a piano, could play and sing you anything, though I can't say it ever did him any good in the long run. The last time I heard of him, he was seen opening oysters—professionally, I mean—in a

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bar in Sydney. Still," he conceded, "you might be able to make something out of it."

"Some fun, that's all. But, by Jingo! I concocted a gorgeous little tune the other night—Saturday, it was. Did you hear it, Felton? It's about the best I've struck." And he began whistling his little tune, and it sounded better than ever.

"Let's have it, Jollifant," said Fauntley.

"What do you mean? Go down to the school-room?"

"I do. A quick one all round"—and he tipped some Old Rob Roy into the three glasses—"then some music."

"Right you are!" Inigo drank his approval.

"But look here," Felton began, signalling an alarm with his eye-glasses.

"No time to look there, Felton," said Inigo sternly.

"Drink up. He's worried because the Tarvin stopped me on Saturday," he explained to Fauntley.

"She's out," said Fauntley, "and I don't know if it would matter if she weren't." And he drank confusion to the woman. "Bring your glasses and a syphon. I've got the bottle." And Felton, sorely troubled, followed them down.

"A little one before you begin," Fauntley suggested, and so Inigo had another drink. He had never seen a keyboard that looked so inviting. He felt he could do anything with it, any mortal thing. He liked this phrase so much that he found himself repeating it: "Any morr-tal thinggg." It gave him a feeling of joyous confidence. *Terum, perum, perum-pum-pum, trrrum*. That was the fine opening flourish. Now he was sliding into his tune, gently, gently at first. *Rumpty-dee-tidee-dee*—it was undoubtedly better than ever—*rumpty-dee-tidee*. He played it through softly.

"Is that it?" asked Fauntley, out of a golden mist of Old Rob Roy.

"It is. D'you like it?"

"Well, I don't pretend to have any ear, but it seems to me absolutely first-rate, Jollifant, far better than most of the things you hear nowadays. You ought to get somebody to

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print that. *Rumty-dee*. No, I haven't quite got it. We'll have it again in a minute. Here's luck ! ”

Inigo emptied his glass in reply, then began playing again. He went through half a dozen tunes of his own, and Fauntley tapped his feet and Felton nodded his head, though a trifle dubiously.

“ Bravo ! ” cried Old Rob Roy, speaking through Fauntley. “ You've got a touch, you know, Jollifant, a wonder-ful touch. And a talent, distinctly a talent.”

“ You heard those tunes of mine ? ” said Inigo, wheeling round excitedly. “ I have a phrase describing 'em, thought of it the other day. They're like a family of elves in dress suits. How's that ? ”

“ Not bad,” said Fauntley, “ but I'd rather have the tunes. Let's have that first one again.”

And Inigo, deciding that as a phrase-maker he was above the heads of his present company, went back to his *Rumpty-dee-tidee-dee*, and this time he crashed it out fortissimo, so that instead of slyly hinting that you might slip round the corner, the tune now loudly defied anybody or anything that would keep you in your place and ended by fairly hurling you round the corner. Fauntley kept time with his glass on the little table near the piano, and even Felton tapped his feet. There was such a noise in the room that a car might have been driven up to the front door, the door might have been opened without anybody there being any the wiser.

Concluding with a final crash, Inigo sprang to his feet.

“ And that's the tune,” he cried, “ that the wretched Tarvin woman, that putter of prunes on other people's plates, stopped me playing the other night.”

“ A damned shame ! ” growled Fauntley. “ She's an old spoil-sport.”

“ Yes, I don't like her much, I must say,” added Felton, now throwing discretion to whatever winds Old Rob Roy may have known.

“ Like her, Felton ! I loathe her. What a pair they make ! I've not told either of you yet what happened last night.” And he plunged excitedly into an account of the

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proceedings of the night before, beginning with Mr. Tarvin's discovery of Miss Callander outside the door. As soon as he had brought Mrs. Tarvin on to the scene for the first time, Inigo's narrative began to lose its grasp upon truth until at last it was an Arabian Night of embarrassed "chumhas" and "what's this, what's this?"

"Oh, damned good, damned good!" Fauntley was rolling in his chair. "I don't believe a word of it, Jollifant," he roared. "But it's damned good."

"Honest truth, I assure you!" Inigo roared in reply. He was sitting down now and the three of them had their heads together. "So she came along, crying 'What's this, what's this, what's this? I can't understand, I really can't understand. Now tell me, tell me, tell me.' 'Well, you see,' said poor old Tarvin, 'you see—chumha.' 'No, I don't see chumha. I don't see chumha at all,' she screamed back at him. 'I see you talking to a girl, a girl, quite young, a young girl. I cannot have you talking to a girl, cannot have it at all, not at all.'" Inigo stopped for a moment, exhausted.

"She never said that, though," Fauntley roared again. "You can't tell me she said that."

"No, I know she didn't." Inigo sprang up, flung back his wandering lock, then slapped his knee. "But don't you see I'm giving you the soul of the thing, absolutely? That's what she meant."

"Is it, is it indeed?" It came in a scream of rage from the door at the other end. There stood Mrs. Tarvin.

The shock, the sight of her standing there, coming at the end of a long crescendo of excitement, cut the last binding thread of self-control in Inigo. Up jumped Old Rob Roy himself to answer. "How now, you secret, black, and midnight hag!" he thundered down the room.

"What!" she shrieked, and swept forward, followed by her husband. "What did you say? You're a drunken rowdy. I've never been so insulted in all my life. And by one of our own masters! I've never heard, never never heard, of such a thing. The school-room a tap-room,

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mimicry and insults and abuse! Why don't you say something, say something, James? Tell him to leave the place at once."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Jollifant," said Mr. Tarvin as sternly as he could. "You're—er—drunk. Chumha."

Fauntley was trying to rouse himself. "He's a bit tight, Tarvin. Birthday. Get him to bed."

"Pardon me, Fauntley, but I'm perfectly sober," said Inigo. "And I refuse to be got to bed."

"Is this—this—this fellow to stay here?" demanded Mrs. Tarvin of her husband, in a passion.

"Of course not. Expect resignation," muttered Mr. Tarvin.

"He must leave in the morning, in the morning. I won't have him here a moment longer, not a moment." Her rage seemed to increase.

"Quite understand. Chumha. Disgraceful business," her husband muttered again. "Rather awkward, though, to leave in the morning."

"And why, pray?"

"Well, to begin with, must have term's notice. Chumha."

"In short," said Inigo, making a sweeping gesture but speaking quite distinctly, "if I leave in the morning you must pay me a term's salary. Fifty-two pounds. A mere pittance, but mine own."

"I don't care about that," cried Mrs. Tarvin, looking at Inigo as if he were a kind of reptile, then glaring at her husband. "I won't have him here any longer, not a day, not a day. I knew what it would be from the first, from the very first. Another of your ridiculous appointments. I'll have him out to-morrow whatever it costs."

"Very well, my dear," said Mr. Tarvin, who knew only too well where all the money came from. "We will have to manage somehow—chumha—for a week or so. You will—er—have your term's cheque in the morning, Jollifant, and leave us then."

"I should think so indeed, I should think so," cried

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Mrs. Tarvin. At this moment, Inigo was trying to close the lid of the piano and not succeeding very well because he had failed to notice that a large match-box had been left on the keys. "Don't touch that piano, don't touch it," she went on. "Take yourself off to bed and get ready to leave in the morning."

"I am not leaving in the morning," Inigo announced loudly.

"Certainly you are."

"Oh no, I'm not. I'm leaving to-night. Now."

"Don't be an ass, Jollifant," said Fauntley, putting a hand on his arm. "You can't leave to-night. It's impossible."

"Not at all impossible. An excellent idea."

"There's no train," Fauntley pursued. "You couldn't go anywhere."

"I can walk," said Inigo triumphantly. "I can put a knapsack on my back and walk. I leave to-night. It's not raining, is it? Is it raining, Felton?"

"I—er—I don't know," stammered poor Felton, who had been busy trying to efface himself for the last five minutes.

"I'm surprised, very surprised, at you, Mr. Felton," said Mrs. Tarvin severely. "I expected better things of *you*."

"Felton was dragged into this," said Inigo, "because I told him it was my birthday. Felton can't resist a birthday, can you, Felton? Mr. Tarvin, I'm leaving to-night and so I will ask you to make my cheque out now." He spoke very slowly and carefully.

"This is—er—chumha—ridiculous, Jollifant. You'll have to go, of course, but still—er—chumha."

"Let him go, let him go," cried Mrs. Tarvin. "We shall only be spared trouble in the morning. I don't see why we should have to make out cheques at this time of night, but the sooner he goes the better, and if he has to sleep in a ditch, it's no concern of ours, no concern at all. Mr. Felton, kindly remove these filthy glasses and open all the windows. This place is disgusting, disgusting." She turned a still quivering back upon them and marched out.

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Quarter of an hour later, Inigo had his cheque in his pocket and had packed his immediate necessities in a knapsack. "I'll tell you where to forward the trunk and the suit-case," he said to Fauntley, who was looking on. "Keep an eye on these things, will you, until I want them? It must be twelve, isn't it? And I don't feel a bit sleepy and it's a fine night and I've finished with this place and I needn't look for another for some time and I don't give a damn. I call it a glorious exit."

"And I call it damned silly," said Fauntley, grinning. "And God knows how we shall manage those classes next week, or what sort of blighter the agencies will rake up for Tarvin. But good luck, Jollifant! Here, there's a spot of whisky left. We'll have a parting drink."

They were having it when Felton looked in. "You're really going then? I told Miss Callander you were. She looked out of her bedroom and asked me what was the matter. Can I do anything, Jollifant?"

Inigo shook him by the hand. "Not a thing but say good-bye. I commend your soul to the Eternal Verities, Felton, though I haven't the least notion what they are. We shall meet again sometime, I feel it in my bones." By this time, he had put on a raincoat and swung his knapsack over it, found his hat and a fierce ash stick, and was ready to go. Fauntley went out with him. As they passed her door, Miss Callander looked out. "I'll be with you in a minute," Inigo whispered to Fauntley, and stayed behind.

"You really are going?" Miss Callander, in her dressing-gown, looked rather like a pink rabbit. She opened her eyes as wide as possible and her mouth hardly at all.

"I'm sacked and I'm going."

"You crazy boy!" she whispered. "I'm awfully sorry. It will be my turn next, very soon, and really I shan't be sorry, I really shan't."

Inigo looked at her steadily, with a small friendly smile. "I should try Egypt if I were you."

She nodded confusedly. "I've just been—been writing there. Oh, but—I've got something for you." She pro-

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duced a little packet. "It's only some biscuits and chocolate, but I don't suppose you've got anything to eat with you, have you? And you'll get awfully hungry."

Inigo was really touched. It came to him in a flash that nobody had done anything like this for him for years. He had been living almost entirely in a world of services for money. "Daisy Callander," he cried softly, "you're a brick. I'm tremendously grateful. I'd forgotten how hungry I should be in an hour or two."

"Where are you going?"

He stared at her. "Do you know, I'd entirely forgotten that. I've no idea where I'm going. I shall just walk and walk. Good-bye—and good luck!" He held out his hand.

She slipped her hand into his instead of shaking it. Then she raised her face a little. "Good-bye," she said, rather tearfully.

He realised that she wanted him to kiss her. Strangely enough, though he had never liked her more than he did at this moment, he did not want to kiss her. But he did kiss her, gently, then gave her hand a final squeeze, and hurried downstairs to find Fauntley waiting for him at the front door.

"Fine, but coldish and black as pitch," said Fauntley. "In an hour you'll wish you'd stayed here and gone to bed. You'd better change your mind now."

"Not I," said Inigo, peering out. "I like the smell of it. I'll push on, Peterborough way."

"You're a young ass, Jollifant."

"And I'll let you know what happens to me, Fauntley, give you an outline of my adventures till we meet again."

"I repeat, Jollifant, you're an ass. And if I were twenty years younger, I should come with you."

Two minutes later, Fauntley had bolted the door and Inigo had turned out of the grounds into the lane, walking quickly westward.

The Good Companions.

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